

Begun this week! "Cavalry Custer," by the Author of "Lance and Lasso."

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No. 363.

LEND A HELPING HAND.

BY EBBE E. REXFORD.

Lend a helping hand, my brother,
To the weary in the way;
You will find life's burden-bearers
Journeying onward day by day.
When you see the faltering footsteps,
And the faces white with pain,
Lend a helping hand, my brother,
God will help you back again.

Lend a helping hand, my brother,
To the overburdened one;
Make his load a little lighter
Ere the setting of the sun.
Lift the weight of care and sorrow
From the soul bowed down so low,
Spreading sunshine in the pathway
Of the sad ones, where you go.

In the march of life, my brother,
Have you never weary grown?
Had the heavy burden lightened
Which you thought to bear alone?
By the hand outstretched to help you,
By each helpful word and smile,
Lend a helping hand, my brother,
It is grandly worth your while.

Silver Sam;

OR,

The Mystery of Deadwood City.

BY COLONEL DELLE SARA.

CHAPTER V.

THE BREAK IN THE PRAIRIE.

"What if it tempt you toward the flood?"

The officer in command of the party, a gay young sprig of a lieutenant, who had won his "bars" at West Point, not amid the red fields of the great civil war, was the first to recover from the surprise occasioned by the mysterious disappearance of the strange horseman.

"By Jove! you know, this sort of thing really astonishes me!" he exclaimed; "where the deuce did the fellow go to? Did any of you see?"

Not a man in the command, numbering ten all told, besides the lieutenant, could answer the question.

"Shure, I could ye that it was the devil or wan of his imps!" Paddy Pude exclaimed. The Irishman was mounted behind one of the soldiers.

"Oh, but that is nonsense, my man," the officer rejoined; "that is all bosh; let us push forward and examine into the matter."

And then, after advancing a few hundred yards, the mystery of the strange disappearance of the masquerading horseman was fully revealed.

Extending in an almost straight line across the prairie, from north to south, was the bed of a watercourse, the level ten feet or so below the surrounding prairie.

The horseman, evidently posted as to the lay of the land, had ridden straight down the almost perpendicular bank of the now empty river-channel, for the hot prairie sun had long ago dried up the feeble stream; it was a river only when, in the springtime, the snows melted on the mountain sides; and the horseman, taking advantage of the shelter thus afforded, had succeeded in escaping, for by the time his pursuers had reached the edge of the break horse and rider were out of sight.

Paddy Pude was not at all satisfied with this explanation; his belief in the unearthly nature of the horseman was too strong to be easily shaken.

The lieutenant, dismounting, called a couple of the men to accompany him, and clambered down into the ravine. By the light of the moon they endeavored to ascertain from the hoof-marks which way the horseman had gone. In the loose, light sand the tracks of the steed were plainly visible, and an expert tracker would have had very little difficulty in trailing the fugitive, even by the light afforded by Madam Luna.

But the soldiers were neither scouts or Indians, and they were soon baffled in their attempt to follow the trail. As near as they could make out, though, the horseman had ridden to the north—toward Deadwood.

They clambered up the bank again, and after mounting their horses, held a consultation.

"It is useless to attempt to follow the fellow; he is probably five miles away by this time," the officer said.

"Yes, sir; the horse was a runner," the corporal responded.

"It's a dale of holy wather, and a praste, and a prayer, ye'd nade to catch that gintleman, do ye mind?" Paddy exclaimed, expressively.

The soldiers laughed, and the corporal added:

"He played it on you, Paddy."

"Yis, of course, ye know all about it," the driver replied, with great dignity. "But I'll lay ye two pins to a slap on the back that there ain't a man to the fore here that will lave me pop at him wid my revolvers as I did at this thing, whatever it was, living or dead!"

The soldiers were rather astonished at this declaration.

"How many shots did you fire, Paddy?" the lieutenant asked.

"Not wan, sur; divil a cap would go off! Shure, the thing put a spell on them!"

Again the troops laughed; the joke was too rich.



"Stranger, slap me in the face if you love me!"

"Well, suppose we gallop up to the back and see how much plunder he's taken," suggested the officer.

"Divil a bit of plunder was there aboard, barrin' the mail," Paddy growled, as the horses struck into a brisk trot. The doctory Irishman was not pleased with the unbelief manifested so openly as to the specter.

On arriving at the back, the lieutenant found, as he had expected, the mail-bag open and the letters scattered over the ground.

"Just as I told you," he said, dismounting and examining the bag. "Opened by a key, too. Your spirit, Paddy, works in very mortal-like ways."

"And what the divil would the likes of him want with letters?" asked Paddy, in wonder, joining the lieutenant on the ground.

"After valuable letters, I suppose, though I don't see exactly how he expected to get them in a mail from Deadwood; but I can't waste any more time with you now," and then the lieutenant swung himself into the saddle again.

"I must be off after my despatches."

The squad were in chase of a couple of soldiers who had forsaken Uncle Sam's colors and made a run for it.

"You had better gather the letters up, drive back to Deadwood and report."

And then the officer gave the command and the soldiers rode off, leaving the driver in a state of great bewilderment.

"Begorra! it was a spirit!" he muttered, shaking his clenched fist at the fast-retreating soldiers. "Bad cess to ye, ye murderin' blue-coated marauders! Is it the likes of yees that will tell Paudsen O'Hoolahan that he don't know a gintleman from the other world when he sees him?"

Having relieved his mind with this defiant speech, the Irishman proceeded to pick up the letters and replace them in the mail-bag from which they had been so cleverly abstracted.

Then he tossed the bag into the back, mounted the box and headed the team for Deadwood.

Great was the astonishment of the express-agent—Thomas Black, the "deacon"—when Paddy roused him from his slumbers at an early hour in the morning and related the strange attack on the coach.

The deacon was also the postmaster, and he immediately proceeded to examine the letters.

"Did he take any, Paddy?" he asked, as, with a nervous, trembling hand, he ran the letters over.

"Sorra a wan of me knows," the Irishman replied. "Shure! I thought it was a man fust, an' I blazed away at him like a major."

"And your weapons missed fire, you say?" Black had finished the examination of the letters and there was an anxious, troubled look upon his face.

"Yis, sur, ivery wan of them! I never saw the likes of it before."

Again Black commenced to run the letters through his hands, examining each and every subscription closely.

"Did you have any caps on your weapons?"

In a twinkling the Irishman whipped out the revolvers, and showed the cylinders fully capped.

"Examine the caps; perhaps they have been tampered with," the deacon suggested. He was a sly old coon, and as long-headed as any man in the Deadwood district.

"Oh, no doubt about their being in good

order, sur; it's meself that always attends to them," Paddy said, confidently. But, he did examine the caps and discovered, to his utter amazement, that they had undoubtedly been tampered with, the explosive material having been carefully removed.

"Holy smoke!" cried Paddy, in wonder. Then he produced his rifle, and an inspection plainly revealed that that weapon had also been rendered harmless.

"I thought as much," the deacon observed, evidently very much disturbed in his mind. "The scheme was skillfully and carefully arranged. You are sure that you did not leave any letters behind when you gathered them up and put them in the bag again?"

"Oh, yis, sur, I was careful to pick up ivery scrap of paper," the Irishman asserted.

"Yis, as sure as I stand here on me two feet this minute; but what is the matter, sur; are any of the letters gone?"

"Yes, two are missing. There were sixty-five letters in the bag. I remember the number distinctly, and now there are only sixty-three."

"And whose letters are gone, do ye think?"

"Ah, that is a mystery," the deacon replied, but here the deacon spoke falsely, for it was no mystery to him.

CHAPTER VI.

"MONTANA."

"For thy three thousand ducats, here are six."

BUSINESS was lively in the Big Horn saloon, as the principal hotel of Deadwood was termed. It was Saturday night and every miner for ten miles around had come into town to procure supplies for the coming week; and, if sober truth be related, the most of them who came from a distance, were fully intent upon making up for their week of toil in the mountain gulches, by getting full of the "bug-juice" retailed so freely over the bars of festive Deadwood.

A credit to the "city" was the Big Horn saloon; as good liquor sold there as could be found clear along the iron-way of the Union Pacific from Omaha to Ogden City. And naturally therefore, the creature comforts dispensed over the well-stocked bar of the "Big Horn shanty," as the irreverent miners were wont to term Dick Skelly's place, were in great demand.

Then, too, at the Big Horn, or some kindred resort, all the news of the day could be heard, and, therefore, in the evening the saloons were a place of general resort, even for the men who were not partial to strong liquors.

A sort of merchant's exchange the saloon was to the bustling business men of Deadwood.

It was a bright moonlight evening and the streets were almost as light as day.

A group of miners were gathered before the door of the saloon, eagerly engaged in discussing the big strike reported to have been recently made in the West Gulch by the owners of the Little Montana mine.

"Who owns the concern, anyway?" asked one of the listeners, evidently a stranger.

"Why, it's Hallowell and Montana's strike," the teller of the tale answered.

"Montana?" The stranger was puzzled by the appellation.

"Yes, William Jones as he calls himself, but

all the boys call him Montana; thar's whar he hails from, an' thar's a darn sight too many Jones' round this hyer county now, so we gin this one a handle that's going to stick to him," the free and easy citizen of the Black Hills metropolis answered. "Thar he is now," he added, as he caught sight of the individual referred to coming slowly up the street.

And all the little knot of people turned eagerly to look at the man, whose name for the last three days had been in everybody's mouth. The "Little Montana" had struck the richest "lead" that had been discovered in the vicinity of Deadwood for a long time.

"Montana" was not a man to be passed without a second glance, even in the Black Hills, where so many strange characters jostled elbows.

He stood just about the medium height, but most superbly built, every limb in just proportion; and the well-developed muscles swelling out under the silken skin like branches of steel wire, gave promise of wonderful strength.

A peculiar head; the long, oval, high-cheeked face of the Southwest; the black eyes and raven-hued hair of the Louisiana creole; the hair straight as the locks of an Indian, worn long behind, and rudely cropped in front, savage fashion; a long silken mustache curled down over the ends of the firm-set mouth, black as the hair, and a small imperial, just filling up the hollow between the full, red under lip, and the point of the square, massive chin, adorned the odd, peculiar face. The complexion of the man was the strangest thing about him. Marble-like was the color of the skin, not a tinge of vermilion on the cheeks nor a touch of bronzing, though the kiss of the sun-god is hot in the Black Hill gulches.

His dress, too, was a strange contrast to the garb of the men who usually made Deadwood city their headquarters.

He was rigged out in full Indian fashion, except that the deer-skin hunting-shirt which he wore, was cut like a sack-coat with pockets at the side, and was buttoned across the chest instead of being confined by a belt. It was thrown open at the throat, exposing the bosom of a red flannel shirt, loosely buttoned around the massive, finely-formed neck. His head was covered by the broad-brimmed, high-crowned felt hat, so commonly worn on the frontier—semi-military in its character.

No weapons did Montana display, so different from the majority of the miners, who generally strutted around with small sized arsenals strapped to their waists.

More than one had commented upon this fact, and it was shrewdly suspected that Montana was well "heeled," to use the frontier "lingo," borrowed from the slang of the English cock-pit, although he made no display of knife or pistol.

In fine, Montana carried his weapons concealed beneath his clothing, after the fashion of the citizens of the Eastern metropolises, rather than use the honest miner's custom of the far West, and buckle them plainly to his waist.

But a quiet, peaceable man Mr. William Jones seemed to be, for he had never been concerned in any trouble since his advent in Deadwood; perhaps it was because from his build and muscular development, he gave promise of proving a troublesome customer if roused to anger.

As Montana approached the saloon he not-

ded to those of the little group standing before the door with whom he was acquainted, and was about to pass in, when a burly figure emerged from the entrance and accosted him.

"You're jest the man I want to see, Montana."

The speaker was the new-comer's partner, Elijah Hallowell, a big, brawny specimen of humanity from the pine woods of Eastern Maine; big in person, big in heart; a man, every inch of him.

"Jest the man I wanted ter see, by gosh!" Hallowell repeated. "Come here a minit," and then he dragged Montana a little out of earshot of the rest. "Say, I've had an offer for the mine—twelve thousand dollars, clean cash! That's six thousand apiece an' a royalty afterwards on top o' that. What do ye think of it, hey?"

"I think that we had better hold on to the mine," Montana answered, speaking in the slow, clear, deep, peculiar voice natural to him, and which was so great a contrast to the shrill tones of the New England native or the hoarse gutturals of the Western "Pike," Missouri's son.

"A powerful sight of money, twelve thousand dollars," Hallowell urged. He was evidently tempted by the offer.

"Yes, but if it is worth that to any one else, it is worth that to us; besides, who is there round these diggings that has got twelve thousand dollars in cash?" Montana was plainly an unbeliever.

"Oh, that's all right; it's a 'pilgrim' jest got in. He's got the rocks—gobs of 'em!" Hallowell explained. "He intends to get up a stock company, put in mining machinery so as to properly develop the claim, an' he says that in his mind there is no doubt but that we will make more from our royalty, arter he gets the thing properly organized and running, than we are getting now, and we'll have the twelve thousand dollars in our pockets, hey! What do you think of that?"

The son-of-the-State-of-Maine, as Hallowell was fond of terming himself, was considerably excited.

"Christmas!" he continued, without waiting for Montana to reply; "twelve thousand dollars! and you only paid three thousand dollars for the bull thing, and everybody sed that you were cheated, too."

"Lige!" exclaimed Montana, abruptly, addressing his partner by the familiar camp term, "you've been drinking."

The good-natured giant was confused for a moment by the direct accusation, but never attempted to deny the fact.

"Christmas!" he stammered; "why, Montana, you must be able to see right into a feller! Talk 'bout hawk-eyes! You must have eyes like a gimlet."

"Well, Lige, I never saw you so before," Montana said.

"That's so; I hold a heap, I guess, too, but this pilgrim-to-night got my measure, an' he's filled me chock up. Fuller'n a tick; if I ain't I wish I may die! But I know what I'm about, Montana, don't I? Come, old pard; I ain't drunk, am I?"

"Oh, no; but it wouldn't take much more to make you so."

"By gosh! you're right there!" the giant exclaimed, in a burst of confidence. "Montana, you're always right! You've got a head on you jest as steady as a clock. I never seed you off your balance-wheel yet, an' we've been running in double harness some time now, pard. You're a man, you are; an', as many a time I've told the boys, you kin jest beat the world on flapjacks!"

"How did this thing commence?" asked Montana, never heeding the liberal praise bestowed upon his culinary skill.

"Well, I got talking the matter over with this gentleman—I tell you, he's got the rocks—an' as a business man he sweeps the deck!" Hallowell answered.

"Yes, and he asked you to drink!"

"By gosh, he did an' then I set 'em up; an' then Dick Skelly set 'em up, an'—Montana, if you take this offer, the money will get you that little bright-eyed gal, as sure as shootin'!"

CHAPTER VII.

THE BOSS BULL-WHACKER OF "SHIAN."

"So should he look that seems to speak things strange!"

MONTANA looked the speaker full in the eye for a moment, and a peculiar expression appeared upon his pale face.

"Yes, sir—ed!" continued the open-hearted man-from-Maine; "with the rocks in your pocket you kin get the gal—jest as easy as rolling off a log; an' oh! ain't she handsome! Well, now, you kin jest bet on that! She's got a face as fresh as a barn door on a frosty morning!"

"What do you mean?" Montana asked, quietly, but evidently offended by the allusion.

Hallowell, however, was in altogether too great a state of excitement, and too much under the influence of the potent bug-juice, to notice it.

"Why, Miss Kirkley, of course; I ain't blind, Montana! Taint for nothing that she comes galivanting up the West Gulch, and that little bunch 'of posies that she had the other day was brought up expressly for you, too, but I'm the biggest fool west of the Missouri, and I never dusted out so she could gin 'em to you;

but I saw, Montana, I never thought 'bout it, till she lit out."

"You're dreaming, man," was Montana's curt reply.

"Not much, old partner!" Hallowell cried.

"Oh! you can't pull the wool over my eyes! It can't be did! I'm up to snuff, I am!"

"See here, old fellow; I'm not the kind of man to run after a woman," Montana said, grimly.

"I've seen altogether too much of 'em; seen enough in years gone by to make me keep away from 'em all the rest of the days of my life!"

"Shut you don't say so!" Hallowell exclaimed, with the peculiar gravity so natural to some men when under the influence of liquor.

"Why, Montana, she's just as handsome as kin be!"

"So is the tiger-cat, but a man ain't apt to think of the beauty when he feels the claws tearing at his throat."

"What in thunder has got into you, anyway?" asked the big son of Maine, in wonder, greatly amazed at the peculiar expression upon the pale face of Montana.

"Nothing at all."

"But I never heard you speak in this way before."

"Never had occasion to, perhaps."

"Gosh! I r'ally thought that you kinder had a hankering arter the gal."

"You thought wrongly."

"But what makes her come up the West Gulch so much, hey?"

"Answer your own conundrums," replied Montana, evasively.

"Well, if you ain't arter the gal, I guess that she's arter you."

"Much good it will do her."

Montana was in a decidedly bad humor.

"Shut wouldn't you like the gal to have a kind of sneaking notion arter you, hey?" asked Hallowell, shrewdly.

"No."

"Well, I would!" the tall man from Maine exclaimed, honestly.

"Why, it is *you* that she is coming after!" Montana said, with a grave face.

"Oh! go 'way with you! You can't stuff me!" the big miner replied. "But, Montana, I don't want to pry into your affairs, and of this damned whisky hadn't got up into my head, I would have held my tongue, although I've suspicioned the thing for a week or more."

"There is no harm done; we can't help our thoughts."

"And I ain't the only one, either, that has suspected it," Hallowell exclaimed, sturdily.

"What! is there any other fool—I beg your pardon, Lige, I don't want to hurt your feelings!" Montana said, with a spice of grim humor in his tone.

"Oh, go it! I kin stand it; hard words break no bones," the other returned, grinning, good-naturedly. "But, it's a sure enough fact, that's another party has had his eyes on the gal."

"Yes," and Montana's tone was one of perfect unconcern.

"Fact! I've seen him promenading past our place, with his shot-gun slung in the hollow of his arm, a half a dozen times lately, and I reckon that when Miss Kirkley comes walking up the gulch, as she has done pretty often the last week or two, that observing cuss ain't far off."

Montana appeared annoyed.

"Why didn't you say something about this before?" he asked.

"It wasn't my soup! How did I know that you wouldn't object to my sticking my spoon in," replied Hallowell in his rough, off-hand way.

"You've got eyes like a hawk, too; I thought that, maybe, you had noticed how the cat jumped."

"No, I never thought of such a thing; I'll own up, frankly, Lige, I do like to talk with the girl. Her presence here amid these wild scenes and rude surroundings is like a camellia flower blooming in a desert waste; it calls back hours of peace and joy amid the blossoms of civilization, and for the moment I close my eyes; another image rises there, and then I think what *might* have been if fortune had smiled kindly on me."

Never before had big Elijah Hallowell seen his partner—cold, stern-faced, iron-willed Montana—in such a mood, and he was considerably astonished.

"Sho! I guess that you have been married, then?" he said.

"Oh, yes," replied Montana, relapsing instantly again into his usual coolness. "Yes, pard, I have been married—much married, as they say of the Prophet Brigham, three or four times, and Injuns I don't count."

"Get out! now you're stuffing me again!"

"But who is this gentleman that has manifested so much interest in the West Gulch and its surroundings?"

"Can't you guess?"

"Lige, I am not a Yankee like you, and guessing isn't my best holt," Montana replied, quietly.

"Major Germaine!"

"The deuce you say!" Montana was surprised.

"Fact for sure."

"And is he after the fair Mercedes?"

"Oh, he's jest hot arter her! why, it's the talk of the town how he hangs round her."

"I don't admire him, much," Montana observed, slowly. "I don't know why it is, I have no reason to dislike him, but somehow—I suppose it is a kind of presentiment I have—I feel sure that he is no friend of mine."

"I reckon that he won't be of he thinks that you are arter the gal, or that she is arter you."

"Oh, he needn't trouble himself about that," Montana said, carelessly. "As far as I am concerned, he can have the girl and welcome."

"But to come back to business, you didn't want to sell, hey?"

"No."

"It's a big sum, and then that's the royalty afterwards, you know."

"The party wants to organize a stock company, did you say?"

"Yes, put in machinery and go at it in tip-top shape. Oh, I tell yer! he's a master feller for business."

"What's his name—do I know him?" abruptly demanded Montana.

"Oh, no, he's a stranger in these parts, but he's a great gun in mining matters. He's a big toad in the puddle, you bet."

"What's his name?" again asked Montana.

"Campbell."

"Campbell!" and cool, stone-like Montana almost started.

"Yes, Mortimer Campbell, Esquire, Member of Congress from Illinois."

"Oh, I know the man!" Montana exclaimed quickly, and an angry light shone in his eyes.

"Most Campbell from Egypt, as he is always termed, the biggest scoundrel that ever escaped the hangman's noose. Sell the mine to him! Why, old man, we wouldn't get a dollar. Organize a company! Pah! inside of six months he'd have mine, company and everything, and all fixed lawfully and legally."

"Well, you are acquainted with him!"

"Yes, and yet I never saw him in my life nor he me."

"What's the man they call Montana?" cried a hoarse voice just then, and turning the two beheld a brawny, red-shirted, big-booted man, with a whole arsenal of weapons belted to his waist, his head surmounted by a silk hat curiously battered up into a conical shape, and the brim pulled down over his eyes.

Straight up to Montana he strode.

"Oh, look at me!" he cried; "I'm Jimmus Bludsoe, the boss bull-whacker of Shian! own cousin to the mate of the Fers-a-rie Belle!" and then he half squatted down with his hands on his thighs, and glared at the miner.

"I'm the old he-goat of the Big Horn mountain range—ba-a-a! Stranger, slap me in the face of you love me!"

(To be continued—commenced in No. 362.)

THEN AND NOW.

BY L. C. GREENWOOD.

Thou wert true to me, love,
When the days were bright with joy's sun;

That thy face I might look upon;
The happiest of men:
Ah, how you loved me then!

So true to me the while,
And as bright as each day with love;
While mine was fortune's smile
Thou didst cheer me with words and song;
Making brighter the hours
We counted as ours.

Thou wert loving and kind
When no shades on life's pathway fell—
When love with joy was twined,
And we were entranced by their spell.
Ah, none but I will know
That thou didst love me so!

But, love, when shadows came,
And trials of life tried me sore;
When love should be the same,
For I needed it the more,
Why didst thou colder grow
When I still loved thee so?

Thou wert cold to me, love,
When from me fortune's face was turned,
And ended from thee, love,
For affection's offering I learned:
I mourned the love grown cold,
Longed for thy love of old!

In those happy days when
Joy's garland crowned each youthful brow,
Wast easier to love me then,
Than it is to love me now?

Or to fortune's wheel bound
Does thy love go around?

And yet, I will not chide
Aught what of change there came to thee,
But patiently abide—
Winning back the love that's due me,
Which in this world dost another
To give me in another!

I will not ask it back
In this cold, cold world of ours,
Though it is all I need,
For, like sunshine upon flowers,
Thou wilt fall upon my heart
In heaven, no more to part!

Winning Ways:

OR,
KITTY ATHERTON'S HEART.

BY MARGARET BLOUNT.

CHAPTER XII.

THE MOTH AND THE CANDLE.

"Heedless of all, I wildly turned,
My soul forgot—nor, oh, condemn
That when such eyes before me urned,
My soul forgot all else but them!"

"That moment did the mingled eyes
Of heaven and earth to me reveal,
I should have seen, through earth and skies,
But you alone—but only you."

—MOORE.

A DESERTED WIFE!
There is a whole history of sorrow, of danger,
of temptation, and of sin in those three words,
to an understanding eye. A woman, with all
a woman's dangerous gifts of beauty, grace, and
talent, her best feelings trampled upon, her love
despised, is left to herself in a world that is full
of pitfalls for the unwary, full of danger for us
all. The privileges, the liberty of a wife are
hers—hers, also, the privileges and the liberty
of an independent single woman. Her position
is so peculiar that the eyes of all are upon her—
she is watched upon the right and upon the left,
and being painfully conscious that whatever she
says or does is almost certain to be misinterpreted,
she grows careless and defiant, and, in nine cases
out of ten, takes her own way, regardless of the
society which is so eager to chronicle her first false
step. What else can be expected? I am not speaking
of a "religious" woman, to whom such a trial
would only come as an additional means of purification.
I am speaking of a proud and faulty heart—of
Kitty's heart. She was a mere girl still—she
was gay, beautiful and high-spirited. Her first
entrance into society had been a most successful
one; she was followed, flattered, and petted by
men and women whose simple notice would have
been an honor to a queen. Therefore, when her
husband, conscious of his own wrong-doing, and
enraged at her knowledge of it, left her so suddenly
and abruptly, what was the natural result
of the rash action? Was she to shut herself
up forever in the green recesses of "Gan Eden?"
Miss Marchmont, it is true, counseled
such a prudent retirement, but Kitty hated solitude,
and answered, "No!" She went back
among her friends, who welcomed her gladly.
Enough was known of the quarrel and its cause
to justify her in the eyes of the world, and for
once women espoused the cause of a sister woman,
and abused Mr. Oliver soundly, while they
protected and encouraged his wife. Never had
the parties been so pleasant—never had she met
with such kindness from every one as now. She
laughed at Miss Marchmont's warnings, threw
open "Gan Eden" to her visitors, went to parties,
operas, and balls without end, and took her
pleasure bravely, without troubling her head
with the proceedings of Mr. Oliver in France
and Germany.

She loved him, it is true; but she was made
up of pride as well as of affection, and he had
wounded that pride to the quick by his public
reunions of her. Though she never saw him
again on earth, she would not be the first
to sue for a reconciliation. When Miss Marchmont
undertook the part of mediator, she was
surprised at the fund of resolution and obstinacy
with which the young wife met her. There are
some people who find it much more difficult to
be forgiven than to forgive; and Kitty was one
of them. If her husband chose to come and
acknowledge his fault to her, she said, she might
excuse it and welcome him back; but nothing
on earth should ever induce her to make the first
advance; she would die before she would do it!

And there the matter rested, and two hearts
pledged solemnly to each other at the altar beat
apart—anger, and hatred, and defiance blending
with every unquiet thought.

And now I approach a very awkward—a very
unpleasant part of my history. Kitty was one
of those unfortunate creatures who, with the
best intentions in the world, are perpetually
getting themselves into serious scrapes, unless
they are carefully watched over and tended by

a faithful and constant guide. The poor child's
manner was frank, free and confiding; her heart
was warm and generous, and always in need of
something to love, and her nature was kind and
sympathizing to a degree; and all those qualities,
so good in themselves, combined together at
this period, it would seem, to draw her on
to misery and shame.

She had, as I have already said, Miss Marchmont
for a near neighbor, as well as an intimate
friend. But "Gan Eden" had two sides, and
while the left wing overlooked the hospitable
roof of the "Growlery," the right trampled
closely upon the grounds of the "White Pines,"
a large and handsome villa, occupied by a
returned East Indian, whose wealth was so fabulous
that the children in the neighborhood were
firmly imbued with the belief that he often
breakfasted on melted pearls, and had diamonds
and rubies served up, as a matter of course,
each day with his dessert. His house in town
was a perfect palace; his two country-seats were
marvels of taste and display, while his villa, or
"box," as he modestly called it, needed only the
"roc's egg" of Aladdin's marvelous hall, to
make it the eighth wonder of the world in
Kitty's admiring eyes.

The East Indian was a childless widower,
and being somewhat lonely in his splendid
villa, during one of his visits there, had
amused himself with watching the movements
of his neighbors in their pretty garden. Kitty's
wild-rose face pleased him—some tone in
her voice, some turn of her head or figure,
reminded him of his long-buried wife, and he
determined to make her acquaintance. This
was easily done. To know Mr. Conyers was,
vulgarily speaking, a great feather in one's
cap, and when Mr. Oliver was told at a dinner-party
one evening that the great man
was to be introduced to him, he went
through the ceremony with a flutter of delight.
His writings, no doubt, had attracted his
attention!

"And where is Mrs. Oliver?" asked Mr. Conyers,
after a moment's conversation.

The author answered indifferently that she
was at home, and went on to other things.
The great man lifted his eyebrows slightly as
he talked. The next morning he called at
"Gan Eden," and saw Kitty. From that day
he was often at the house, and the first fruits
and flowers from his forcing-houses and conservatories
were always sent to her with his
"love." Mr. Oliver laughed at his courtesy
sometimes, and told Kitty that she ought to
try hard for a place in the nabob's will; but
he never tried to check the intimacy, and Kitty
learned to associate much of her pleasures
with the idea of the kind and good old man—
especially after Mr. Oliver had left her. For
then, no father could have been kinder to or
more thoughtful for her than Mr. Conyers.

All this was very well. But from these simple
and innocent causes most extraordinary
effects sometimes ensue. As in this case, Mr.
Conyers took it into his head that Kitty must
be dull by herself—that Miss Marchmont was
too old and too literary to be a proper companion
for her. Miss Marchmont would have
felt infinitely obliged to him had she known
which way his thoughts were tending; but they
were first revealed to her, as well as to every
one else, by the apparition of a pretty, golden-
curled, blue-eyed girl of seventeen, who was
introduced at "Gan Eden" and the "Growlery"
by the nabob, with no small pride, as
"My niece, Louisa." My niece, Louisa, was
a very good as well as a very pretty girl,
but Miss Marchmont did not exactly take to
her. Her ideas of literature were too vague—
her ideas about crochet-work and husbands too
well suited to suit the authoress. But Kitty
fell in love with her at first sight, and the fancy
seemed quite mutual. At the end of a week's
time they were inseparable, and if you called
the name of one the other was pretty sure
to come with her when she answered. Their
styles of beauty and of dress were so utterly
different that there could be no rivalry between
them, and they went out continually under
the protection of Mr. Conyers, who was as
fussy over them as if he had been an old hen
with two chicks. Except in the first weeks of
her marriage, I question if Kitty had ever
been so happy in her life.

Into this small Eden, with its twin Eves,
the serpent came at last. Kitty's new friend had
one most dangerous fault—she had a brother!

And this brother, a young officer in the Guards,
was his uncle's acknowledged heir, and had, of
course, sometimes to pay his respects at the
"White Pines." He had been somewhat remiss
in this duty till his sister came; for he hated
the seclusion of the place, and missed the company
of his brother officers and friends, whom he was
never allowed to bring with him. But after
he had paid one visit to his sister, and seen her
new friend, it was wonderful how attentive a
brother and nephew he became. Did Louisa
wish to ride, to walk, to go to the opera, or to
the play, it was always "Dear George" who
escorted her. Mr. Conyers and Mrs. Oliver,
of course, joined the party. Then there were
quiet family dinners at the "Pines," to which
Mr. Oliver was always invited, and which she
never failed to attend. George was invariably
present, and what so natural, as that when he
gathered flowers for Louisa's hair and a bouquet
in his uncle's conservatory, he should gather
some for her friend at the same time?

They were worn; splendid crimson blossoms,
or pink, waxy buds, that set off Kitty's dark,
bright beauty well. Then came long strolls
upon the terrace, and around the moonlit grounds,
or quiet evenings in the library, when the
young captain read aloud to the ladies as they
sewed—or evenings full of music as a grape is
full of wine, while Mr. Conyers slept placidly
in his easy-chair, or as placidly surveyed the
beautiful group, congratulating himself on the
fact that not one among his neighbors or acquaintances
had handsomer "young people,"
than he. Good, innocent man! he was so utterly
unconscious all the while of the mischief
he was helping on, that it was quite ludicrous
to see.

Ah, me, how dangerous, and yet how sweet,
such intimacies are! It is very wrong, I know,
and so does every one else know, but it seems
as if the slight consciousness of possible danger
gives an added zest to these interviews. It is
the seasoning that makes the peculiar charm of
the dish!

It matters little what gives the first touch
to the "electric chord" wherewith poor Byron
declares we are bound. The most trifling thing
can do it—a look, a word, a touch of the trembling
hand—the perfume of a flower—a simple
note of music—all these things may lift the veil,
and make what was before but dimly guessed
at, plain as the open day. It is dangerous
work always, when two souls understand
each other like this—and one of them is bound!

By degrees Kitty came to like the visitor,
and to look far more eagerly than she would
have confessed to herself or to any one else
for his coming. He was very much like his
sister. He had the same peculiar delicacy of
complexion, the same deep blue eyes, the same
soft, golden hair. He was more than handsome—
he was beautiful. And yet his six feet

of stature, his broad shoulders, his heavy mustache,
and his martial carriage saved him from the
charge of effeminacy. He was brave, too,
as well as gentle. Louisa had told her friend
of some of his exploits abroad, which he, himself,
could never be induced to mention, and all
they spoke well for his gallantry and humanity.

Kitty liked him none the less, believe me,
that he had smelt powder, and faced a
score of Russians while he carried a wounded
friend from the trenches at Sebastopol. She
thought of him sometimes, exposed to that
murderous fire, with a shudder of fear. What
if one bullet had proved fatal? What if that
golden head had been laid low! Ah, Kitty,
Kitty—those were dangerous reveries of yours!

She had no intention of being unfaithful in
word, thought or deed to her absent husband.
But the constant companionship, the tender
friendship, compared with the long absence,
and the bitter estrangement, were not without
their charms. She felt this, and excused it
to herself, in her more serious moments, by
saying that she liked George Conyers for his
sister's sake. He was like a brother to her—
nothing more. When a young, beautiful and
lonely woman says that of a young, handsome
and disengaged man, we know only too well
what it may possibly come in time to mean.

I would not be understood for a moment to
hint at anything very wrong. These two were
guarded by the most favorable circumstances
from falling into any great sin. Their intimacy
was sanctioned by those nearest and dearest
to them—there was no obstacle in the way
of their friendship, and even the world,
however much it might gibe at such an intimacy
in private, was forced, from the very nature
of things, to be civil about the matter in public.

Add to this that every thought of
Kitty's heart would have shrunk from evil,
and that the captain still retained enough of
the boy about him to enable him to respect the
woman he loved, and you will see that if they
went headlong into ruin they could not, at
least, lay the blame, as too many are wont to
do, upon the "circumstances" and the "fate" that
led them on, and on, in spite of the struggles
they continually made to escape.

At last, however, there came a time (that
time always does come) when they read each
other's heart more plainly than they had ever
done before. They were riding one afternoon
in a green, shady lane, with the deepest flush
and glory of a closing summer's day around
and above them. Louisa was of the party, but
her thoughts, at that moment, seemed to be
very far away. The attendant groom lagged
far behind, and Captain Conyers and Mrs.
Oliver, riding side by side, had the conversation
quite to themselves. At last it languished.
There was a long silence. Louisa, still lost
in thought, never looked toward the pair.
George Conyers drew a long, deep breath.

"How beautiful it all is! And yet—I don't
know why—it makes me feel sad."

Kitty smiled and sighed. The same vague,
restless yearning was troubling both their
hearts.

"One feels so lonely on a day like this," he
went on, in the same low tone. "One feels
the need of close, warm ties to bind them to
this lovely earth."

"You should marry," said Kitty, dreamily.

"Marry! I marry!"

Something in his tone startled her unaccountably.
Their eyes met, and both turned crimson.

"No—I shall never marry," he said, slowly.

"At least—not—as things are now."

Another long pause. Then Kitty faltered
out:

"Would it not be better?"

"Do you wish it? You of all women in the
world. Do you wish me to marry?"

"Why not?" she murmured, looking everywhere
except at him.

"Nay, answer the question fairly. If you
wish me to marry I will do so to-morrow. Do
you?"

She ought to have said "Yes"—said it
heartily and sincerely. Then he would have
rushed off in a fit of pique, married the first
woman who would have had him, and all would
have been well. But Kitty could not tell a
fib, and now that the question was put
so pointedly, she knew that she did not wish
it. She hated his possible wife already—at the
bare thought of her existence. What—all those
delicate attentions, those gentle words,
those affectionate looks, to be given to another
woman, and she left desolate and lonely once
again! She could not bear that.

"Do you?" said the low voice; and the pleading,
sorrowful blue eyes looked deep into her
own.

"Katharine—do you wish it?"

A thrill ran over her at hearing that name,
and from those lips. No one had ever called
her Katharine before, and he who did it seemed
thus to make her peculiarly his own.

"No—I do not wish it," she said, so low
that he could scarcely hear her. He bent in
his saddle to listen, flushed up suddenly, and
laid his hand on hers. She glanced toward
Louisa, hurriedly, and cantered away. But
that look—that clasp of the hand, had told her
all!

CHAPTER XIII.

A PROMISE.

"You read it in my languid eyes,
And there alone should love be read;
You hear me say it all in sighs,
And thus alone should love be said."

"Then dread no more. I will not speak,
Although my heart to anguish thrills;
I'll spare the burning of your cheek,
And look it all in silence still."

—MOORE.

WHAT, then, is a woman to do in a case like
this?

Of course, my dear lady, you are quite
right in what you are about to say. There is
but one thing which she can do with propriety,
and that is, to break off so dangerous an acquaintance
at once, and forever.

But ah! as you so truly say, "It is not
with uneducated people only that ought stands
for nothing." It is a very easy, so to speak,
of one's duty, and so very hard to fulfill it!

The plainest duty is generally the hardest.

Kitty knew as well as you or I, dear reader,
that she ought to see the young captain no
more. She said little to him during the remainder
of that day; and at its close, when she
was safe within her own little room at
"Gan Eden," she thought soberly of all that
had happened, and of all that might happen if
the intimacy was not checked.

There was danger. There were rocks and
breakers ahead. She saw them plainly at last,
as she walked up and down the room, with
her hands clasped behind her. Her friend was
becoming something nearer—something dearer
than a friend to her; and she was a wife,
though a deserted one. Her lonely heart cried
and pined for the sympathy and affection it
saw so plainly within its reach, and she checked
it sternly. She had been weak and wrong
so far, but she would atone for her unaccountable
error on the spot. And under the influence of

this resolution, she sat down at her desk and
penned this note to the captain:

"You were wrong this afternoon. You must see
and feel it by this time. And I think I must have
done something wrong myself, or you never would
have presumed so far. We ought never to meet
again. And yet I love Louisa, and it would break
my heart to give up my friend so suddenly. Do
pray stay away from the villa for a little time, till
you have quite forgotten this afternoon and me."

"KATHARINE."

She sent this note the next day by the
hands of her own maid. There she committed
a great blunder; for the woman, of course,
supposed it must be a love letter, and fancied
she had got her mistress in her power. She
had made other blunders in the note, as may
be seen. She had

little brook, he took her hand and looked into her face. Did any vision of the New Forest and its singing stream—any remembrance of another friend, and another time, rise up before her eyes, at that moment? I fear not. The sudden meeting had so startled and unnerved her that she was scarcely mistress of herself—scarcely able to remember where or what she was.

"Katharine," said the captain, "why did you write me that cruel letter?"

"Was it cruel? I did not mean it so. I only meant to tell you that we must meet no more."

"Why not?" he asked.

"You know as well as I."

"And yet you see that we have met. We must continue to meet all our lives long. Air, earth or ocean cannot hide you from me now, because I love you, and you know it."

She tried to free her hand from his, but he only held it closer still.

"No! You must hear me now; and then, if you like, I will never speak again upon this subject. Why do you object?"

"Why?" she said, looking at him with surprise. "Am I not married? Have I any right to hear such language from any man? Oh, you know how wrong this is! Do let me go, and never come here again till I am far away."

He dropped her hand.

"Go, then! But remember this—with you goes all that makes my life endurable; and if I am to lose you entirely, I will do my best to lose that life, too."

"Oh, how can you talk like that? Oh, I wish, with all my heart, that you had never met me!"

"I cannot echo that wish. Whatever you may make me suffer, I can never, for a single moment, regret having known you."

"But what can I do to help you now? You know that I am married—"

"Yes—there is no need to remind me of that fact so often," he said, bitterly. "But, Katharine, if you will only listen to me a little while, I will show you how you can help me—how you can make a good and happy man of me."

"Tell me, then."

"Don't send me away from you. Let every thing go as usual."

"How can you ask such a thing?"

"If you are thinking of what happened the other day, I assure you I will never repeat the offense. At that moment, and under those circumstances, I could not help speaking. Nor can I find it in my heart, now, to regret that I did so. Since you have known what you are to me, I have felt more at rest. Only understand once for all, Katharine, that my life is yours, and I shall be content."

"But how can I accept such a sacrifice? I can give you nothing in return."

"I ask nothing."

"And for a mere friendly intercourse with me, can it be possible that you are willing to give up all nearer and dearer ties, all hopes of a happy home with some other woman?"

"I am quite willing."

"You must not do it. I cannot allow it. If you will only marry, I will still be your friend."

"Many thanks," was the sarcastic reply. "Perhaps, as you are so bent upon my marrying, you will select my wife?"

"Take the young lady I saw you with the other night."

The words came almost before Kitty knew what she was saying. It was too late to recall them, though she would have given worlds to do so.

"What young lady? Where did you see me?" he asked eagerly.

"It was only a stupid jest of mine. Let us talk of other things."

"No; you must tell me. Where could you see me without my seeing you? With a young lady, too?"

"There was nothing so very wonderful in the matter," said Kitty, assuming an indifference she was very far from feeling. "I was going to Mr.—'s soirée with Miss Marchmont, and as we drove down Piccadilly, we happened to see you handing a young lady out of a carriage at the door of a house. So I recommended her to you, but only in jest."

If he had laughed at that moment, he would have spoiled everything. But he looked as grave as a judge when he met her penetrating glance.

"It was Miss Stainforth," he said, quietly. "She is my cousin, and thinks me good enough to hand her from her carriage; but as for anything more, why she is engaged to Lord R—, and is to be married in three months from this time."

Kitty drew a long breath. Was she relieved at hearing this piece of news? Who shall say?

"Well," she said, more cheerfully; "if Miss Stainforth is disposed of, there are plenty of young ladies still in the market, I think, and you should try your fortune there."

"Are you serious?"

"Quite."

"You spoke so differently the other day."

"But I have been thinking since. And if we are to continue friends, you certainly ought to marry. It would put the intimacy on a safe and pleasant footing at once. Even if I were differently situated—if Mr. Oliver was here—it would do so. You could then visit us as a friend of the family—his friend as well as mine. But while you are a single man, and I am a deserted wife, you will forgive me if I say, that I think the less we see of each other the better it will be for both of us."

"This is too much!" he burst out, angrily. "Katharine, you do not understand me. You take me for a mere man of the world, and imagine that I have some sinister design in prosecuting this friendship. God knows, my darling, I would rather die than injure a single hair of your head!"

"I believe that!" he said, softly.

"Yet still you fancy I look forward to some reward for my 'sacrifice,' as you persist in calling it. What sacrifice do I make? I don't want to marry unless I can marry you. If I had seen you before Mr. Oliver, I would have done my best to win you for my wife. He came first, he holds you still. That, of course, I cannot alter. I wish him no harm. I do not speculate or build upon his death. I simply say, that if, at any future time, you should be left alone in the world—more really alone than you are now, I should claim you as my own, if you would let me. In the meantime, no other woman shall fill your place in my home and heart. If it is fated that we are never to be more than friends to each other, so let it be; but I shall still be faithful to you. So that I see you sometimes—hear you speak—get one kind word from those dear lips—one kind look from those gentle eyes, it is enough. I will ask for nothing more. And you can surely grant so much without harming yourself or me. I ask you to do nothing wrong, Katharine—only to show a little mercy to a poor, forlorn wretch, who has nothing but you on earth—nothing to love—nothing to hope for."

His voice died away in a sob, and Kitty's eyes were full of tears.

"Oh! how much you must love me!" she said, simply.

"You are right, my darling. I love you far better than I do myself, and I ask so little to make me happy. You will not refuse it, Katharine?"

"No."

He pressed her hand to his heart—to his lips—to his tearful eyes, and then resigned it.

(To be continued—commenced in No. 359.)

TWENTY-EIGHT.

BY T. C. HARRAUGH.

Upon my brow another year
Hath laid its coronet,
With here and there a fitful flash
Which I would fain forget.
This earth doth wear a veil of snow,
The land is big with fate;
The snow-bird shivers on my sill,
And I am twenty-eight.

Methinks the forms of absent friends
Are moving in my room;
Faint footsteps from the unseen world
I hear amid the gloom.
I feel the touch of gentle hands
That I have missed of late;
And loving voices seem to say:
"To-night he's twenty-eight!"

What have I seen, what have I learned
In all those years of life?
That hearts against the world must wage
An everlasting strife!
I do not think I'm growing old,
I walk erect and straight;
Though Time is at my ear to-night,
Whispering: "twenty-eight!"

Stay, Father Time, and let us chat,
I'm sure you need not fear;
Into my sanctum, up the steps,
You come but once a year.
Hang up your scythe on yonder hook,
I guess 'twill bear its weight;
You are the oldest, Father Time,
For I'm but twenty-eight.

It seems to me, old gray-headed Time,
Your years are twice as long
As they were when I was a boy—
A school-boy, rudely strong,
With pen in my hand I write all day,
Nor mind the hours late;
And naught reminds me but your face
That I am twenty-eight.

Good-by, if you are going, Time,
You've been a friend to me;
I haven't got a silver hair,
You have not dimmed my eye.
You've brought me loves and many tears,
Less shadow than sunshine;
When next you lift my hovel's latch
I will be twenty-nine!

Nobody's Boy:

OR,
THE STOLEN CHILD.

BY CHARLES MORRIS.

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE HOT TRAIL.

BILL GRUBB soon found the pass he had entered to be unfruitful of results. It was the dry bed of a mountain stream, and contracted, after a mile's devious wandering, into an impassable crevice.

He turned and rode back to the main valley. The pass had been difficult of ascent, and some time had been wasted in this exploration.

His friends were not within view. Riding to the head of the direct pass, which Tom Wilson had chosen, he saw them nearly a mile in advance, moving slowly down the valley.

A hand was waved to him from the party, and they rode on more rapidly.

"Tom has struck the trail," said the scout, as he turned his horse down the pass. "He don't want to waste no time, that's sure. I'll have to make good time to overhaul them."

There was another person who had been left behind like himself, but who was within half a mile of the party. As he approached he saw that this was William Denton, the cousin of the stolen child.

They had ridden five miles down the pass before he finally overtook his friends. There was no vestige visible to his eyes of the trail they seemed to be following, but the soil of the pass had been too much cut up by their horses for any single track to remain discernible.

"Where's the trail, Tom?" he asked, as he rode to the head of the party. "Is it plain?"

"No," growled Tom. "I'll be shot if it ain't pegged out. And it was as clean cut a trail as I ever follered."

"That's blasted queer. A hoss' hoof would make its photograph on this side. Must have took to the hard ground on the hillside. How far did you make it out?"

"A mile and a half, or two mile, I reckon."

"Durned odd. Shouldn't wonder if he'd doubled. Where's Picacone Pete?"

"S'pose he's coming down the pass after you. Didn't show himself afore we started."

"The dogs he didn't," cried Bill, casting an anxious glance backward. "Hope the lad ain't come to no harm. There's a clear view two miles up, and no signs of him."

"Oh, he's all right. S'pose he's loping along after us."

"Shouldn't wonder if he'd found the trail, for I'll be fadded if there's any here," said Bill. "There's a neck just ahead of us. If he's gone down you'll find his mark there."

They rode on to where the pass contracted, two steep hills constricting it to within less than a hundred feet of width.

A thin alkaline soil, destitute of herbage, covered this space. The two scouts sprung from their horses, bidding the others to keep back—and traced the whole width of the neck, not suffering a foot of the soil to escape their keen scrutiny.

"We're on the wrong scent, lads," cried Bill, at length. "No hoof has passed here inside a week, and maybe not inside a year. We've got to turn back on our tracks. I'll bet a pony Picacone Pete has found something."

The up-hill passage back was traced rather slowly by the horses, which had already been ridden fifteen miles at high speed.

They were nearly an hour in reaching the point at which the side passes branched off.

"Shoot me if I ain't getting worried about the boy," said Bill, as they reached this point without any trace of Pete being seen. "Anybody here know which pass he took?"

"I saw him strike into that narrow opening to the right," said one of the men, pointing to the rocky jaws of the contracted pass which Pete had taken.

"Yes, and you can shoot me for a blind monkey if Joe Prime ain't doubled on us!" cried Tom. "Here's his track, close to the rock, pining up the valley. He's been hunting stony bottom, and stepped in that patch of sand."

"Follow me, lads," cried Bill, turning his horse into the pass. "Pete's got the best eyes in the party. If he ain't found the trail and follered it, then I don't know the boy."

Up the rocky cleft in the hills they rode in single file, Bill Grubb leading. The eyes of

the scout were fixed keenly upon the ground as Pete's had been before him.

"Cussed stony," he muttered. "Ain't enough dirt here to fill a bung-hole."

Through the rapid curves of the narrow gully they wound, moving slowly and with keen observation.

"Shouldn't wonder if it was a cut right through the range," said Bill. "Ever been down this way, Tom?"

"No. But I've been through twenty first cousins to it. Bet it cuts through to the next valley."

The scout suddenly drew up his horse, forcing those behind him to stop with startling haste.

The next instant he sprung to the ground, leaving the animal standing in the center of the pass.

"If anything's happened to Pete," he muttered, "I'm his pard, and I'll hurt the feller that hurt him."

"What's up?" cried Tom Wilson, leaving his horse and walking briskly forward.

"Bloody work of some kind. I dunno just what yit. But I'll go a good hoss that Pete's been hurt. There's some of his hair on that stone, just where the blood's thick."

"And, see here!" cried Tom, pointing to a small patch of sand, "it's the trail ag'in, or I'm a baby."

"Sure as thunder!" yelled Bill. "That's my hoss' private mark. Bricktop has ambushed here, and has shot Pete. If I don't prove sudden ruin to him fur it, then go back on me."

"Where is Pete, then?" said Tom. "Blamed if there ain't some mystery in it."

"And where's Nicodemus? And where's the hoss?" asked Bill. "It's maybe not so bad, after all. Pete's ahead of us anyhow. He ain't behind us. I'm going to pelt on if it takes me to Frisco."

"And here's with you," cried Tom, tightening up the strap of his saddle as he spoke. "You gentlemen can go back to the train. Hand Bill and me what grub you've got, though. We mought want it."

"Will we wait for you at the ford?"

"No, no. I mought have to ride a hundred miles cross country. Take the train at double speed down the Humboldt, and make for Virginia City. There's some of you been over the route."

"I will go with you," said William Denton, leading his horse forward.

"Not if I know myself," replied Bill Grubb, curtly. "Don't want no greenhorns with us. None of your stripes anyhow."

There was something in the look that he fixed on the speaker that silenced the latter. He drew back with a flushed face, but made no answer.

"Hunt out Mr. Ellis in Virginia City," continued the scout. "Tell him of the stealing of his daughter. If we don't turn in very soon after you, tell him to send a party across toward Austin to look for us. I reckon the trail will lay down Reese river."

Ten minutes afterward the two experienced scouts were riding onward down the pass, while the others had turned back, and were slowly retracing their way toward the train.

The pass grew still more difficult and rocky as they advanced. They reached its highest point about two miles forward, and began the slight descent toward the valley to the west.

"There's water ahead there, Tom," said Bill. "I've a notion we'll strike soft ground inside the next half-mile."

He was right. A small stream, rising from springs in the mountains began to trickle down their route. It was bordered by a narrow track of soil, green with thin clumps of bunch grass.

The horses eagerly nipped the fodder as the two men sprung to the ground and commenced an earnest scrutiny of the banks of the stream.

"Here it is," said Tom. "And here! And here! He's gone this way sure enough. But, what track is this?"

"Pete's horse," said Bill. "The boy is after Bricktop; or the hoss is, anyhow. Them tracks ain't long made. I've a notion that the trail's hot."

"To horse ag'in, then, and let's see what stuff there is left in these critters."

They were forced to go somewhat slowly down the winding pass, notwithstanding their haste.

It seemed interminable. For miles they followed its long course, the stream growing stronger as they advanced.

"A half mile more will bring us out in the valley," said Tom, "if I'm any judge of signs."

"The pass is widening, if that's anything to go by," said Bill. "I'm sort of anxious to reach its mouth. We mought see something of Pete."

They rode on, rather more rapidly. They had not gone far before they were startled by the sharp report of a rifle at no great distance in advance.

The scouts looked at each other significantly, then, as if by a common impulse, threw themselves from their horses, and ran noiselessly but rapidly down the pass.

A few steps brought them within sight of its mouth, at the same moment that a fierce medley of yells broke on the air.

The scene before them was a startling one. Backed up against the rock at the side of the pass stood Picacone Pete, a pistol in his hand, while his rifle lay at his feet.

Before him stood four yelling Indians, while a fifth lay prostrate on the ground.

They were armed with bows, and a stalwart savage had just fitted an arrow to the string, when Pete's pistol cracked, and the Indian tumbled heavily to the ground.

Simultaneously two rifle-shots sounded from up the pass, and two more of the savages fell.

Pete glanced in wonder toward the two men who were running rapidly toward him. A single glance enabled him to recognize the scouts.

He turned and took deliberate aim at the fleeing savage. Again his pistol cracked sharply, and the last of his fierce foes fell heavily to the earth.

CHAPTER XXV.

FOLLOWING A DOG'S NOSE.

"SHOSHONEES! Blame their red pictures!" said Tom, after glancing into the face of one of the savages. "They're some of your peaceful Injuns. I've had more than one scrimmage with them at Gravelly Ford. Call your dog off, Pete, the nigger's dead as a door nail."

Nicodemus was worrying one of the fallen savages, but slunk away at the stern command of his master, with a look as if he felt thoroughly ashamed of himself.

"Blow me if the boy don't shoot straight and true!" said Bill, looking with admiration upon the fallen Indians, every one of whom was dead. "Have they hurt you, Pete? Your face is covered with blood."

"Them cusses didn't do it," said Pete, stooping to wash his face in the stream. "Got that back in the pass. Got my top-knot scratched by a rifle-ball."

"We saw the place, Pete, and feared that you had been killed."

"Nary kill," was Pete's answer. "The feller shot an inch too high."

"Joe Prime, weren't it?"

"Who said so?" asked Pete.

"We saw the trail just where you fell, and reckoned the balance."

"Reckoned too fast then. The trail went ahead of me. I cotched this scratch from behind."

"The devil you did! Who sent it?"

"Nobody knows that, 'cept it's Nicodemus. The dorg had his eyes turned back, and mought have seen it. Kind of depend on him to spot the feller yet."

"Bet I know who done it," said Bill, a sudden remembrance coming to him.

"Don't be knowing too much now," said Tom. "You knowed it was Joe Prime, an hour ago. Now you're going to know it was somebody else. Best not be guessing."

"The dorg knows. He's no fool of a dorg, Nicodemus ain't. Bet my pile he sorts out the chap."

"We are losing time here," said Tom. "Let's look up the trail."

"There it leads straight down stream," said Pete. "I was follering it with my nose down, like a hound, when I was stirred up by an arrow from one of them dead Injuns."

"And where's your hoss?"

"You kin see him there, making his dinner off of bunch grass, three miles out."

Before them lay a broad valley, running southwardly, bordered by the mountain range in whose edge they stood, on one side, and by a similar range on the other. In its center was a bright gleam, as of running water. On either side of the stream was the welcome green of fresh herbage, merging into the sober gray and brown of the desert sides of the valley.

Pete's horse was visible in this green border of the stream, busily cropping the succulent grass.

Reloading their weapons, and making a hasty meal of the provender they had brought with them, they prepared to continue their journey.

"I'd like to put this Injun meat under ground," said Tom. "If we had a bag of powder to blast them a grave. Can't dig a hole in the solid rock."

"You're gitting soft-hearted about Injuns," said Bill. "Ain't got no time to dig holes for copper devils. Hop up on my hoss, Pete. We'll catch your critter afore long."

"No, I am able to walk."

"Hop up, I tell you. You've had one boy's share to-day. Ride a bit slow and I can keep up with you. Our animals ain't got much run in them now."

An hour more had elapsed ere they reached the border of the stream, and succeeded in catching Pete's horse.

It was a narrow creek, running in a broad bed, which in the rainy season might have been filled with roaring waters, but was now well nigh empty.

"There's a Nevada river for you," said Tom. "They all start as if they meant work, and then die in the ditch. Bet it's swalled up afore ten mile."

"Does the trail follow it?" asked Bill.

"That's the next question. Here it is on the edge of the water. But it's lost here. The hound's playing an Injun dodge on us. He's entered the stream."

"Sure as shooting," said Bill, "and the fun is to find where he left it. Cross over, Tom, I'll take this side. We must smell him out. He'll strike for a bit of hard side."

While the two scouts walked warily downstream, leading their horses, Pete took the upstream route, watching the borders of the narrow creek with all the keen scrutiny of an old frontiersman.

Nicodemus accompanied him. The dog seemed to have an idea of the object of this movement, and ran along with his nose to the ground, smelling every inch of the way.

For half a mile Pete proceeded, with even closer caution than that exercised by the scouts. He felt that he had a reputation to make for shrewdness.

At the point he had now reached the soil had grown much thinner, and the luxuriant herbage below was replaced by occasional bunches of grass, alternating with bare, hard ground.

On the opposite side of the stream it was yet harder, and destitute of grass.

Pete mounted his horse and rode into the shallow water, crossing to the opposite side. Nicodemus swam over after him.

"Now, Nick, my good feller," said Pete, "if you never showed your fetching up afore, show it now. There's Tom Wilson and Bill Grubb, two old hands at this game; and here's Picacone Pete and Nicodemus, two young hands. Are we a-goin' to let them beat us, Nick? I rather guess not. Tain't in the wood, dorg. Use your sneller lively, and see if you can't bring down old Bricktop."

The dog barked, in acknowledgment of the trust reposed in him, and ran eagerly along at a short distance back from the stream, trying the ground with his keen sense of smell.

Pete, who had again dismounted, followed him, scanning the ground with all the acuteness of his vision.

He was interrupted in this by an eager bark from Nicodemus, who was now running back from the stream over a bit of stony ground.

"Now jist look at that dorg," said Pete, his eyes following the animal with admiring glances. "Bet my pile there ain't such another dorg this side the Rockies. Anybody that says that Nicodemus ain't a gay old coon, that feller's got to fight."

The soil here was too hard for even an iron hoof to impress it, and he followed the dog for a considerable distance back from the stream without a discovery.

But what was this! Here was a bunch of sage brush, one stalk of which had been recently broken. Here was a faint scratch in the soil. Here—it was—by Jove it was—the well-known mark of the shoe of Bill Grubb's horse.

Pete sprung to his feet with a shrill whistle that reached the ears of his distant friends. They were still moving slowly down the stream, but lifted their heads and looked quickly back on hearing his signal.

Pete was waving his hat in wild triumph. Springing into their saddles they rode hastily back.

"What's up?" cried Bill. "Struck anything?"

"Look at the dorg!" said Pete, pointing to where Nicodemus was still coursing.

"The dorg? You ain't called us back because that cur has nosed a prairie fox?" cried Tom.

"Look here, then, and tell me what he's nosed," said Pete, pointing to the footprint.

"Don't you be calling that dorg a cur. I fight for that dorg."

"By my gran'mother, Bill, it's the trail!" cried Tom, and the dog's nose is worth all our eyes."

"It is, or I never saw the hoss that made

it," said Bill. "Mount, lads, we don't want our eyes with Nicodemus coursing ahead of us. The trail must be hot or the critter wouldn't found it in this hard side."

"He's strikin' for the hills," said Pete. "Don't see no

HOW HE REVEALS HIS FACE.

BY JOHN GOSPIP.

Sometimes pride blinds our eyes, and we
Look up and tremulously say—
Though Christ we cannot see;
My God, illumine the darkness way
Betwixt my soul and Thee!

Then grants our Father this reply:
My child, thy gaze restrain!
Though thou canst not My face descry,
Thou mayst thy sight regain
If thou but seek, where'er thou art,
With eyes unsealed of pride,
To recognize the saintly part
In faces at thy side!

Great Captains.

PETER THE GREAT.

"Emperor of all the Russias and Father of His Country."

BY DR. LOUIS LEGRAND.

WITH Peter Michaelovitch Russia may be said to have emerged from barbarism to take position among modern nations as a State and power. Under Alexis, his father, much had been done to cement his kingly authority and to direct the barbarism of the wild hordes who were his subjects into civilized ways; but it was reserved to the son to master and mold the vast energies of those rough children of fierce ancestors, and to force the Russian name to prominence and eminence.

The whole of that vast region lying north of the Black Sea, west of the Caspian, and east of the Baltic, had for centuries been overrun by Tartar, Scythian and Slave from the east and south, to be met and fought by the savage Scandinavian tribes of the north. These various peoples little by little coalesced, so that when the Mongol invasion of the twelfth century came, the Russians as Russians, under elective princes, fought them. But these Mongols nearly possessed the country, and when the grand prince, George II., fell, in the great battle of Sitá (1237), the Russian dynasty temporarily succumbed. These Mongols themselves then coalesced with the heterogeneous races and bloods of the country to a considerable extent; but the war with the Tartars continued until the close of the fifteenth century, when the Russian czar, Ivan I., re-established the national power firmly, and through his wife—the beautiful Greek princess, Zoe—made the religion that of the Greek Church—which has continued to this day to be the Russian established church.

From that reign dates Russia proper; but the nation at best was a wild, fierce, untamable race, whom Alexis, as stated, succeeded in bringing into something like order and symmetry, as a people. The country known as Russia was then but a restricted area, that did not reach any of the three great seas. Sweden held all the region around the Baltic; the Turks all the region around the Black, and the Cossacks all the region of the Caspian; so that Moscow, as the capital, was also the center of the Russian kingdom.

Peter was born at Moscow, June 11th, 1672. He was the eldest of two children by a second wife, but his two half-brothers proving to be feeble, the wise father named the robust Peter to be his successor. This wish was, however, thwarted by Peter's half-sister, Sophia—a very ambitious and resolute woman, who caused her sickly brother Feodor (Theodore) to be proclaimed czar, on Alexis' death, in 1676. Theodore died in 1682, and, passing by his weakly brother Ivan, named Peter as his successor, who was, accordingly, so proclaimed.

But Sophia was not to be thwarted. She secreted the weakly Ivan, and giving out that Peter had murdered him, excited a revolt of the Strelitzes, or militia, who at once rallied to her own supposed danger. Ivan, however, appeared, and the Strelitzes hailed him as czar. "I will be so," answered the trembling boy, "only on condition that my dear brother Peter shall share my throne." Peter and Ivan were together crowned June 23d, 1682, but by Sophia's machinations the Strelitzes became so threatening that Peter and his mother fled to a monastery for protection. The Strelitzes followed the boy thither, and would have slain him at the very altar had not the priests saved the child. The old body-guard of the czar now came to the rescue and restored the lad to Moscow, where thirty of the Strelitzes were at once beheaded.

This intimidated Sophia; but, resolved to reign as regent, she soon became so in fact, as the youth of Peter, and the weakness of Ivan, rendered their subjection no difficult matter. Peter's rare energy of character now developed rapidly. He formed two companies of young soldiers—the sons of nobles, and taking an admirable French officer, Lefort, for teacher, soon obtained an excellent knowledge of tactics and discipline.

As he advanced in years, surrounded with every temptation the wily Sophia could throw in his way, he and his companions gave way to great excesses, we are told; but the excellent Lefort was the good genius who directed his active and eager mind in the right channels. By his influences Peter called to his aid the old diplomatist, Sotow, and the German mathematician Timmermann, and under their guidance, and his excellent mother's watchfulness, the youthful czar grew in that wisdom that was a fine preparation for the reign to come. Sophia still reigned as regent, but her watchful eye beheld a future that her ambitious spirit resolved to thwart.

Peter was allied to the daughter of a noted boyar, when he was seventeen—an act that so disconcerted Sophia's plans that she plotted, on a certain great religious celebration, to murder Peter, his wife and his mother. This plot was betrayed by a Strelitz officer, and Peter, with his mother and wife, fled to a monastery for protection. Lefort and the Scotch general, Gordon, followed him thither, with their troops. Thus protected, he now resolved to assume sole power.

Sophia was forced to take the veil in a convent, while her adviser and prime minister, Prince Galitzin, was stripped of all his great riches and banished to Archangel. Peter then made a grand entry into Moscow, (1689), and in the sight of all the people, embraced his brother Ivan, who gave all power willingly into his hands.

Peter now entered upon his remarkable career. To follow that, even in epitome, would far exceed the limits prescribed for these papers. He was literally to form a kingdom—to develop an empire out of material bewilderingly crude. But a more indomitable will, an energy less tireless, a mind more unconventional and eager, and courage less tenacious the world never knew. He felt within himself the possibilities of the situation; he counted upon years of reign to consummate his work, and went forward not as one feeling his way, but as one directing even the elements and seasons. To reform the whole system of

government, which was shockingly corrupt—to correct the manners and morals of the "better classes," which were grossly low and vicious—to elevate the lower classes, who were but half-civilized bores—to instruct mechanics, and start manufactures in all branches which were almost unknown—to open up great institutions, and trade and commerce—demanded not only stupendous energy, but required stupendous ability to master their details and to indicate their methods. But when, superadded, were the entire creation of army and navy—the strenuous struggle against powerful foes—the necessity for conquest to obtain seaports—the formation of alliances, and the instigation of commercial relations—the foundation of schools, colleges and societies—we indicate what he both assumed and accomplished, and what entitled him to the title of "The Great."

His first efforts at government reform were met by almost fierce resentment from the nobles, and by the estrangement of almost all classes of his subjects who hated innovation and repelled change. But, scorned by Lefort, and the clear-headed Scotchman, Gordon, he called around him an army composed largely of foreigners; they were his tower of strength, and placed him in a position to force obedience to his will.

With rare discernment, he made himself amenable to law and discipline. He enlisted in the army as a private soldier, and rose literally from the ranks through all the grades before he obtained a commission. He made the young boyars (nobles) do the same. He compelled the troops to dress in tight, trim clothes, European fashion—discarding the cassock costume. He made them shave off their long and much-prized beards, and to crop close their hair. He changed the whole system of rations and cookery, and by such procedure, in two years' time had a corps of 20,000 men, full of soldierly enthusiasm and devoted to his interests.

Then he set about creating his navy. He brought in Dutch and Venetian ship-builders, and built vessels, first for Lake Peipus, and thence pleased with his success, on the White Sea—the first real Russian navy (1694). He sent a number of Russians to Venice, to Holland, and to Leghorn, to learn ship-building. He built vessels on the river Don, and with their aid, and the enterprise of his army, besieged the fortress of Azof, on the Black Sea. The Turks held out. He hastened back to Moscow, enlisted skilled engineers and artillerymen, parted affectionately with his dying brother Ivan, then returned to the siege. His shipyard on the Don had supplied him with a fleet of twenty-three galleys, two fire-ships, and four ketches; and with these he defeated the Turkish squadron off Azof and pressed the siege of that strong fortress until it yielded (July 29th, 1696).

This first victory to the Russian arms aroused great enthusiasm among all classes. It was but the incipency of a scheme to drive the Turks from the Black Sea, the Swedes from the east coast of the Baltic (then wholly in their possession), and the Cossacks from the Caspian. He proceeded to prepare for this ambitious purpose by augmenting his revenues and elaborating the foreign element in his army and public offices, which aroused some of the boyars and the Strelitzes to a conspiracy for his assassination. A confederate betrayed the plot, and Peter, with his own hand, effected their arrest, at imminent personal hazard. Their summary execution was a grim reminder of the iron hand of the tsar.

Peter now took the step that gave him European celebrity. He resolved to visit Western Europe to learn its methods of government, to study its arts, and to form alliances with its sovereigns. Organizing an embassy, he accompanied it as an attaché, under the name of Peter Zimmermann (April, 1697). He passed through the Swedish provinces of Estonia and Livonia—observing them closely; then through Prussia and Northern Germany to Holland, where he tarried, and entered a shipyard in Saardam, as a common workman—serving for seven weeks, making his own bed, cooking his own food, and laboring diligently with the men, to master the art from the beginning. His ministers, Menzikoff and Prince Galitzin, the younger, shared his hut and his labors. He studied the management of a vessel on the Zuyder Zee, under Dutch captains. He assisted at ropemaking, sailmaking, and snit's work. His expertness with tools was quite surprising even to expert workmen. A few lessons seemed enough to give him a mastery. He visited all kinds of manufactories, examining into the processes of everything coming under his observation. He attended on the hospitals, and learned to bleed and draw teeth. At Amsterdam he superintended the construction of a ship-of-war of 60 guns, which he sent to Archangel, for the White Sea fleet ship.

King William III. pressed the czar to visit England, and he did so (January, 1698). There he gave particular attention to the dockyards at Woolwich, Deptford and Chatham. At Portsmouth a naval review was arranged for him. He started in April for Vienna, to study the Austrian army—then the best in Europe—and was about to proceed to Rome, when news of another rebellion of the Strelitzes reached him, and he returned quickly to Moscow—having been absent seventeen months.

He had left Gordon in the capital, with 4,000 tried troops—with Admiral Prince Romanowski as regent. These had suppressed the daring and thoroughly-organized conspiracy to wrest the government from Peter and make Sophia regent. Peter was so incensed at this attempt that he inflicted the most savage punishments on the leaders. A number were decapitated in his presence, and daily, for a month, the executions were made a public spectacle. Twenty-eight gibbets were erected before the monastery where Sophia dwelt, and on them one hundred and thirty of the conspirators were executed, and three of them who had drawn up a petition to Sophia were executed before the window of her cell—one with the petition in his hand. Five hundred suspected persons were banished, and the corps of Strelitzes was abolished utterly. It was a bloody and inhuman retaliation, but it was a brutal age; hence the punishment did not seem disproportionate to the crime intended. Even his wife was among the suspected and the relentless man banished her and compelled her to take the veil. Historians say he did not like her, nor she like a husband whose amours were notorious.

Peter's labors were simply incessant. He waged war with Charles XII. of Sweden—one of the most daring and brilliant captains of the century—and was beaten at first, but with almost unlimited resources of men he finally drove the Swedes from the east of the Baltic.

He first started a fort on the present site of St. Petersburg, in 1703, and there conceived the idea of the noble city which arose as by magic to become one of the most splendid capitals in the world. The building of that city reads like a romance in its story.

He became involved in war with the Turks (with whom Charles had taken refuge) but was worsted, and only extricated from capture or destruction by his mistress, Catherine—a Swede whom he eventually publicly wedded, and had her crowned as his consort in power. To her he was devotedly attached. With her he made a second tour, and was received in Germany and Holland with great splendor.

Returning from this tour his terrible rigor was again manifest against the wrong-doer. His son Alexis, by his discarded wife, he caused to be tried for fomenting sedition. The young man, heir to the throne as he was, was tried and condemned to death, but died two days later, of agitation and prostration. A number of persons compromised in the affair were executed. For maladministration of office, as governor of Archangel, Prince Wolkowski was shot. Even his favorite Menzikoff and Count Apronin were forced to retire. He drove the Jesuits from the country because they interfered with his ordinances. Such was the severity of his will.

But, amid all, he planned for progress and the country developed rapidly. It was a wondrous transformation, everywhere. Cities would look on it; or her small foot, picturing it in bright satin and shining buckles; or she bent over an amber snuff-box to see her dainty, elegant figure, with visions of floating laces and heavy royal velvets; and these thoughts so inflamed her ambition that she pressed on bravely, minding not how tired she was, or how terrible the whirlwind reaping might be of the wind she was so anxious to sow.

And so passed that day too; and then she entered the forest, and, shuddering at the slow, grand surge and sigh of the solemn foliage-sea, she lay down beneath a sheltering rock, ate her few remaining scraps, and slept under her shawl.

She was in the heart of a forest, following a road which had been "blazed" upon the trees, and which she hoped would eventually lead her to some railway station from which she might make her way to Madison, as the first stage of her intended journey to New York.

All that day she toiled on, and the night found her in the solemn forest depths, apparently no nearer her goal than when the day began. She was numb with weariness, and bewildered—every flatter and rustle in the mysterious glades which teemed with unseen life, brought her heart to her mouth, and extracted a stifled scream. Jose was very miserable as she stumbled down at the foot of a mossy rock, and finding herself too much exhausted to rise again, lay there shivering and moaning. But she was asleep in three minutes, and oblivious of all her sorrows till a stray sunbeam glinted upon her closed eyes, and she sat up weeping that another day had come.

The Red Cross:

OR,
The Mystery of Warren-Guilderland.

A STORY OF THE ACCURSED COINS.

BY GRACE MORTIMER.

CHAPTER XXIV.

JOSE'S WICKED RESOLVE.

AND Jose, the precious bone of contention between these two hot hearts?

Oh, miserable irony of facts, how they were stultifying the loyal fancies wasted upon her! Having made sure that she was actually left in the desert for a punishment—that her supposed conquest was actually drilling her into good behavior, like a schoolmaster with a naughty child—she indulged herself in one of her wildest furies; she shrieked till the welkin rang; she ran about the ruined shed, tearing her hair, and thrusting little inanimate obstacles out of her way with fists and feet, violently, furiously outraging all feminine habit and instinct; and then, when she had made herself hoarse, exhausted and sick, she lay down on the warm sunny heath before the door and slept.

This pathetic slumber over, Miss Jose rose, and taking her head between her hands, thought with all her might what she could do, now, that was just the most unexpected mischief possible under the circumstances, reasoning, with all the miraculous egotism of her species, that it would break the hearts of all her friends.

Stupid as she was, she finally hatched an idea which equally pleased herself, and would, she was sure, cut to the soul all those of her enemies who had so vilely restricted her royal pleasures heretofore. She was going to run away to New York.

She took stock of her attire. It was her best, had been as smart as her own coquettish ingenuity and all Anne's poor little ornaments could render it when she started on her adventures with Arch; but she saw now, to her rage and dismay, that the dainty cambric dress was torn on the wheels and frightfully stained with the black mud of the roads; her hat was tawdry as crumpled flowers and home-dyed feathers could make it, and her pretty feet were indifferently shod in a pair of clumsy brogans from Arch Arran's general store. In her pocket she carried all the cash she had been able to scrape from her father's drawer, ten dollars. These ten dollars had been obtained by the sale of Anne's whole summer's toil in the garden—and were what the family depended on for food until the father could, by some miracle, get more; but Jose wasted not a thought on that side of the question; she knew they would far rather she had them than that she should starve away from home, and if they did not feel so they ought to, and deserved their loss.

She resolved to make the best of her way to the first railway station, buy her ticket for the great city, and trust to her pretty face and wits for the future. She packed up as much of Arch's liberal providing of victuals as she could conveniently carry, and having eaten with an unimpaired appetite (seeing nothing to grieve about, for Jose had very little sensibility, small romance and no conscience), she picked up shawl and handkerchief, full of ham sandwiches, and commenced her tramp.

It was about two o'clock of the afternoon when she sallied forth from the lonely hut to which Arch had consigned her as a punishment for her cruelty to Anne, and she retraced her way among the brown mossy cradle-hills and the bleached and spiky stumps, which the woodman's axe and subsequent fires had spared, to render more hideous the bleak landscape. Miles she walked along the black muddy road through this unvarying wilderness, and the horizon seemed no nearer, though the shadows were stretching longer and the sun was level with her eyes; a cloud of jet-black crows followed her with discordant cawings and croakings; they were all that lived, besides herself, on that dreary plain. Weary and daunted, she at last sank on a moss bank to rest her back against a stump and her aching feet

among dewy snake-berries and frost-reddened tea-berries leaves; and finding her excellent appetite clamorous, ate again, heartily, and before she was aware she was fast asleep on the mossy bank with the crows.

She awoke with the dawn on her eyelids, and started up with a scream of fright, to see wide sky above and cold wilderness around; and then she began to cry miserably, for her limbs were stiff and ached dully, her head was heavy as lead and burning, her eyes ran water, hot and blistering, and her stomach revolted at the idea of food.

But still resolved and set in her willful course, she dried her eyes, and ruefully gathering up the remnants of her store, trudged onward, painfully enough for the first hour, but, gradually, as the day warmed and exercise made her limbs supple, she felt more comfortable, and plucked up heart to pursue her way boldly and cheerfully. And as she went on she amused herself with imaginary scenes of her future splendor, luxury and fashion; sometimes she held out her lovely little shapely hand, brown now with exposure to the summer sun, but pretty as a model in pale bronze, smiling to think how well gay gems and yellow gold would look on it; or her small foot, picturing it in bright satin and shining buckles; or she bent over an amber snuff-box to see her dainty, elegant figure, with visions of floating laces and heavy royal velvets; and these thoughts so inflamed her ambition that she pressed on bravely, minding not how tired she was, or how terrible the whirlwind reaping might be of the wind she was so anxious to sow.

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And this day too passed in solitary journeying, ending when the little bedraggled figure was in the middle of a great heathy barren, blue with berries and alive with ground birds and squeaking field mice.

Jose stood still, utterly unable to stir another step. She had no more tears to cry, no more food to eat, no more courage to hope; nothing left but blistered feet and a heart swelling with black hatred of Arch Arran. "If I live to do it, I'll murder him!" she panted, as she swept the waste wildly for some blink of hope. Nothing but purple plains, encircled with a horizon of crystal green, and she threw herself face down among the wet leaves, choking with dry sobs and gulps of despair.

In the midst of this paroxysm, her ear being pretty near the earth, she suddenly heard a dull rumbling, as if from some hollow cave beneath her, and stopped her breath to listen, her poor little heart fluttering terribly. The rumbling changed into a dull thumping—which grew louder and louder until the earth shook, and she bounded to her feet and stood, stiffened with panic.

Then she saw a group of horsemen not a dozen paces off, making straight for her as it seemed, and in her amazement she stood like a stone. They hurried past in the gloom, some on this side, some on that, as the horses, with keener sight than their riders, swerved from the sudden apparition snorting with fear; not a man lifted his head from his brute's mane, where every head was lowered, to glance at her; in a moment they were past, and would have bounded out of hearing had not the little maiden's presence of mind returned to her just in time.

She uttered a shrill cry, and the weird cavalcade came to a halt, and waited, dead silent. With an odd quaking she made her way after them, as fast as her trembling limbs would carry her, but was startled into rigidity again by a voice, strangely familiar, roaring out: "Stand! Who are ye?"

Jose bit her frightened scream in two, substituting an amazed laugh.

"My goodness gracious, Ned, is it you?" she cried, in her own giggling tones, and she fearlessly ran up to the hero who had spoken, and peering through the shadows at his goggling eyes—sure enough, there sat Ned, on a good black steed, with a score of adolescents at his back, similarly mounted.

CHAPTER XXV.

NED, THE BAD

Ned's adventures up to this point may be narrated briefly.

Jealous of his boon companion Jose's superior villainy, which had at least set her free of what they were pleased to consider the most slavish, sordid and oppressed existence on earth, Ned had taken advantage of his father's illness and the women's preoccupation to run away to Silver-Lead, where for several days he fared pretty well among his father's acquaintances on the plea of looking among them for work; but presently, they having detected something "rotten in the State of Denmark," to use their own present slang catch-word, they turned him off to help himself in the streets; which he proved himself quite able to do, by fraternizing with the scurge of the christened town, a gang of roughs, who had christened themselves by the gallant title of "The freebooters of the West," and under that pleasantly-suggestive caption actually scoured the country-side, robbing defenseless travelers, stealing sheep, clearing old women's hen-roosts, and sometimes even going so far as to break into a lonely country-house when there were none but young girls and babes to fear, and carrying off the silver and loose cash.

Acting under the instructions of this valiant band, Ned, who was not yet suspected, presented himself to Arch Arran whenever it was known Kercheval had sold to him his old nag and broken-down wagon, and then gone away on a journey, and handed him a forged letter from his mother, requesting him to hand the lad the money. It will be recollected that Arch had sent already to the cottage a parcel of provisions, and the cash left over, which had been proudly sent back by the women; he was, consequently, much surprised at the counter-order, but feeling eager to hope the best from

the family, he gladly hailed this sign of conciliation, and without cavil paid the money into the young miscreant's hands. Thus dowered, the band received Ned back with fulsome adulations, and appointed him, one of their chief officers, perhaps as indemnity for his cash, which he only now found to his dismay went to the common exchequer according to a positive rule. Then the young rogues held a grand carnival in their camp in the depth of a forest. By and by it came out in Silver-Lead that Ned Kercheval had joined the gang, and Arch, full of grief and dismay, made his way to the gulch as we have seen, with the two-fold purpose of sending the father for Jose with his own team, and of relieving the family's necessities, if his blunder about the money had hampered them.

We have witnessed the reception accorded him by hot-hearted Anne.

Arch himself, however, was as yet in ignorance of the youth's latest feat.

In the course of their peregrinations among the wilds which surrounded Silver-Lead, the gang had chanced upon a fine young horse scouring about by himself, and as soon as he had been lassoed by the principal spirit and scoundrel of the fraternity, and brought in trembling and snorting to their midst, to be generously presented to the captain, all the other heroes vowed tolasso each unto himself a steed, and walk no more among the vulgar herd.

Consequently the whole pack betook them to the pastures in the suburbs of the little town, where the citizens were wont to turn their horses each night, and from whence the first-caught had escaped; and under cover of the darkness, above a dozen most valuable animals were secured, and twenty miles off before the dawn.

And now the whole country-side was in a furore, and the rascals, somewhat embarrassed by their riches, were fleeing before the awful faces of the owners, secretly cursing each lad his neighbor for getting him into such a scrape.

At the moment when they nearly rode over Jose, they were in full flight from a grim-looking pair of blue coats, whose brightly-shining brass buttons had struck terror to their souls, as they observed them skimming the ground at the rate of ten miles an hour on two big blood horses, whose superior hunting-points and fresh stride would have landed them in the middle of the freebooters in five minutes, had they been on the same side of the lake, instead of separated by its merciful waters nearly half a mile, with six to scud round.

Off set the horrified train, pell-mell into the barren plain, with the desperate hope of reaching the cover of the forest; and after two hours' goading of their weary and famished brutes, here they were in the very middle of the plain, with the jingle of distant bridle-chain and spur distinctly audible.

"What'n the name of all—but I can't stop, Joe," stammered Ned, whilst his companions, gathering, in the few words which had passed between the pair, who the girl was, postponed their curiosity as to how she got there to a more convenient season, and burst out on Ned with a volley of bitter oaths and questions as to his intentions of keeping them there all night; their suppressed voices and cowering attitudes conveying to Jose, with tolerable accuracy, the circumstances of the case, for she had heard of the "freebooters of the West."

"What's to be done with sis?" hissed Ned, indignantly fending off the torrent of revilings. "We can't leave her here! You confounded—" But this compliment, addressed to the lady herself out of his full heart, was choked in his throat by the whole band turning and sweeping off without another word.

Ned, who we know was not very ready-witted, gaped after his comrades wildly, but Jose, hearing the jingle coming alarmingly near, knew, in a horrible burst of intuition, the imminence of her brother's danger, and hissed out:

"Get off an' hide in the bushes, it's your only chance if the critter's dead beat." And she assisted Ned's slow intelligence by dragging him down, giving the patient animal a stinging cut over the legs with the whip she had snatched, and then pulling Ned into the heart of a clump of young alders, whilst the riderless horse dashed off after his confreres.

And in two minutes more the two constables raced by, with the foam drifting from their steeds' nostrils, and the ground thundering under them.

Then Ned began to whimper, for the lad was very tired, hungry, and frightened.

"And now what's to become of me? I da'n't ever go home any more, for sure's fate the fellows are all a-goin' to be coted, an' they'll peach on me, supposin' I ain't. Oh, Lor'! Oh, Lor'! I wish I hadn't."

"Well! if I ever did see such a soft gabe!" sneered Jose, feeling quite natural and pugnacious again, now her misery had company;

"stead of thankin' me for savin' your neck from a halter you begin to snivel! An' me a delicate lady as has been goin' through all sorts of wild beasts an' wildernesses, an' that for nigh a week—without cry or tear!" And here she comforted her tale, with many additions to it, and a slightly "adapted" version of the insult put upon her by Arch Arran, from whom she described herself as running away out of pure high spirit because they had some words.

And at the end of her narration she calmly announced that she was bound for New York, and meant to make her fortune there.

"You can come along if you like," she added, carelessly.

And only too glad to turn his back upon the hornet's nest he had raised about his ears in the land which called him her own, Ned accepted the invitation.

Having discussed ways and means; guessed out their present locale; made mutual confessions of their late careers; and flung an anathema or two after the gang who had led Ned into the scrape and then left him in the lurch as soon as they saw him in a pother; this suggestion was made by one of them, and assented to by the other:

"Let's sneak home an' see if there's anything we might pick up, of our own, you know, that might help us on our journey."

In the Death Gulch it was the afternoon when Anne quarreled with Arch about his abduction of Jose. Mrs. Kercheval still lay at the open window, dreaming of Heaven, with her patient eyes fastened on the sky. A rustle among the foliage in the little garden at length attracted the dying lady's attention. She raised her giddy, heavy head and looked out. The sun had gone down, leaving that cool, crystal-clear atmosphere of the Indian summer evening, with just a touch of crispiness in the still air to hint of scarlet leaves to-morrow, and an ineffable peace and sense of resting and waiting. The lady saw in a dim corner of the garden-patch, half hidden by the luxuriant branches of a rose-of-Sharon tree, a human shadow, and the glint of shining metal, yellow, like gold. A jingle, too, came to

her ear, as her wondering eyes rested incredulously on the unexpected sight, and she tried to rise to a sitting position, but her weakness wrung from her a groan, and she sunk back very faint, and some minutes passed. She heard again the sharp silvery jingle, the clink of earth against iron, and the trill of falling metal; then a firm, swift footfall. She rose with a spurt of strength. Was it Jonas? or poor erring Ned?

The stranger who had come that evil day to their cottage door, to reproach her husband for some unknown bygone sin, was walking rapidly away to his great black horse, which was standing unfettered by the garden gate.

"Stop! Pray sir, stay!" cried Mrs. Kercheval, her heart throbbing wildly. But her voice was too feeble; the stranger sprang to his saddle and rode away over the yielding turf, with neither sign nor sound. She gathered all her strength and crawled out to the garden—she had not sat up unassisted for three days past; and when she had stirred up the soil in the corner where she had seen him, she found it sown with golden dollars.

Wandering homeward, gipsy fashion, tramping it by day, camping out by night, and living off the fat of the land whenever there was a farm-house to buy food from, out of Ned's ill-gotten treasure, of which he had still some twenty dollars, the brother and sister came to the Death Gulch on that same evening that Anne was pursuing Arch in the boat; that Jonas Kercheval was arriving home from his mission to Scarravelt; that Baron Berthold sowed the garden-plot with golden coins, to relieve the extremity of the innocent sufferers by Jonas' sin; and that Margaret Kercheval crawled out from her couch and found them.

It was already dark as they approached by the old road, unused now by reason of the superior convenience of the new road, but open from end to end yet. They hung back about a mile away, waiting till all might be asleep in the cottage, when they intended to slip in through the door which was never locked, secure what they could, and retire without a farewell to any one.

CHAPTER XXV.

THAT MYSTERIOUS MAN.

JONAS KERCHEVAL had left Scarravelt on the morning of the second day of Griffith's mysterious malady; his last interview with Cordelia having been interrupted by the furious approach of the youth—soon followed by that of Gaylure.

Jonas had, if my readers will please to recollect it, resolved to return to his wife and family, and patiently await the turning of fortune's wheel which was to bring uppermost his heritage of the Warren-Guiderland lands and fortune; this noble prize once legally secured to his wife he intended to drop out of her life as discreetly as he might, without uselessly wringing her heart by a confession of the infamous character of their long connection.

Ten minutes after Thetford's entrance into the drawing-room of the Alhambra, he was seated in the waiting-room at the railway station, his ticket to Silver-Lead in his hand, his hat drawn over his brows, and the lower part of his face muffled up in his scarf, waiting the next train West.

We return to Thetford, whose movements now combine with Kercheval's.

As Kercheval stepped out at the open casement, not recognized by the lawyer, whose eyes were fixed upon Thetford himself, in devouring anxiety lest he should be exposing his nameless fits to Cordelia, to her horror and fatal repulsion, Gaylure clasped the youth most kindly, exclaiming, with his sweetest and most calculating smile:

"My dear fellow, how relieved I am to find you able to be out at all after that little turn—all nerves, I suppose—last night! Why, how well you look and how radiant! What have you been saying to each other? All boys and girls—boys and girls." And he benevolently beamed upon the pallid, dejected Thetford and the agitated, shrinking Cordelia, as if he saw plainly revealed the shy ecstasy of two hearts that had found each other. Murmuring an inaudible apology the young lady hastily withdrew, Gaylure not choosing to remonstrate in his apprehension of another outbreak, and indeed he was only too thankful to have ten her departure by a playfully-significant smile, every moment revealing more clearly to him the traces of the frightful scene which Crystal had described to him, in the young man's haggard appearance, hands covered with court-plaster, wild rolling eyes and general tremulous susceptibility—plainly the reaction from more than common physical sufferings.

Left together, he affected to perceive Griffith's condition for the first time, and seizing him by the arm attempted to lead him to his own apartment, saying, most affectionately:

"My poor boy, how blind I am! Now she has gone I see how shattered you are. Come to my sanctum and tell me all about this singular affair."

Thetford went with him a few steps, but by his fixed eye and mechanical motion it was evident that he was deep in the formation of some purpose which absorbed his whole attention. In the wide corridor he stopped abruptly, raising his head and straightening himself with a proud, spirited air, more like his usual manner than Gaylure had expected to see. Instead of obeying the gentle pressure of the lawyer's hand upon his arm, he released himself, and snatched up his hat and came from the rack, saying:

"I want to ask you one question, Mr. Gaylure. Answer me or not as you please. I am aware that you lawyers hate to be pinned down to plain statements, but as I have little time to spend in circumlocution I must run the risk of offending you by putting my meaning direct."

Nothing could have marked more distinctly the effects produced upon him by late events than these brusque words uttered in that almost bitterly-positive tone; Thetford's natural manner was amiably conciliating in the extreme. Mr. Gaylure said, soothingly:

"Well, my dear fellow, what do you wish to ask? I shall certainly answer you to the best of my ability."

"That man she—pardon, I mean Miss Cora—was with last evening; who and what is he? Why does she walk alone with him? Why does she make appointments to see him *à la-tête*, receive his letter, meet him away from all of us, clasp his hands, hang on his arm—treat him like a lover?" The last word he uttered as if it choked him, and his excitement, which had been rising with every additional clause of his sentence, culminated in a stifled curse, his eyes blazing out like stirred-up fires.

Instead of instantly setting him right, as he might have done with word, Gaylure stood paling and gnawing his mustache, his gaze fastened on vacancy in a momentary oblivion of all around him, as a certain thought flashed

through his brain. This reverie lasted but a moment, yet in that moment he had worked out a whole life's problem—had argued a case more intricate, more terribly interesting than any he had ever argued in a court-room, and had drawn his conclusion, appeased his conscience, and now uttered his fiat.

"You want a direct answer, you say. Well, it shall be what you want, at least in that particular. That man, whose name is Jonas Kercheval, and whose home is in Wisconsin, at a place called the Death Gulch, is—(unfortunately for my wishes in regard to my poor Cora's happy future) *her lover*."

It was said; deliberately, and with malice prepense; and once said, whatever the consequences were, Marcus Gaylure was not the man to risk his reputation by gainsaying it. All he could do now was to watch with interest its effect on the youth whose wretched lot it was to be possessed three days of every month with a mania for murder.

Griffith received the intelligence without any other outward sign of agitation than a sort of suppressed start, shudder and frightful pallor, which extended even to his poor maimed hands, the bleeding nails of which he buried in his palms in furtively clenching his hands. Next moment he turned with lowered eye and forced calmness to the lawyer.

"Thanks," said he, in a muffled tone; "your candor is—the best thing, after all. Now I'm going out and then to my room to lie down. I have not been well, and wish to sleep. If Kool comes looking for me, and asks you anything, tell him not to tap at my door, for I won't require him until I ring. And—and that is all." With these words spoken carefully, as one would say over a formula, the young man bowed to his patron and shot from the door.

Gaylure stepped to the threshold and looked after him as he strode away among the darkling trees, and the expression of his face was so very peculiar that a gentleman who was approaching from the opposite direction, on a tall powerful black blood-horse, curbed his steed's dashing pace to a gentle walk, and scrutinized him closely. Gaylure suddenly became aware of his gaze, and starting passed his hand over his face as if to obliterate the tell-tale expression, then recognizing the gentleman as the physician who had gone to Thetford's assistance, accosted him with bland civility.

"Allow me to thank you for your kindness to my charge," said he, in his heartiest, bluffest tone; "the boy is, as one might say, next door to a son in my esteem, and what affects him affects me. May I hope to count you as one of my acquaintances?" And pulling his card-case from his pocket he offered his card to the physician, who had alighted and was standing near the steps with his bridle over his arm.

"Thanks are superfluous," said he, quietly, bowing ceremoniously to his new acquaintance and handing him his own card. "I was happy enough to discover the young man in one of the caves in time to offer him relief, and at his servant's request I conveyed him to my own residence for the night, as he shrank from intruding his malady upon yourself and your family. Good-morning." He made scrupulous obeisance, sprung upon his horse again and rode after Griffith. Gaylure, who had thrilled at the sound of his voice with a sudden nameless emotion, watched him out of sight, perplexedly questioning himself as to the cause of his sensations, then glanced at his card, which bore the name:

FRANZ ERCKMANN HERZ, M. D.,
COLLEGE OF SURGEONS, ETC.

"Never saw him in my life before. Some passing resemblance," muttered he, retiring.

When Kercheval entered the train, Griffith stepped into the next coach; and some of the railway officials, he shut himself up in a compartment of the palace car, his horse traveling in the express.

Two days afterward he was dropped, with his horse, at a little wayside station four miles from Silver-Lead, and having carefully asked his way, galloped without delay to the cottage of Jonas Kercheval, to perform the mission which Mrs. Kercheval caught a glimpse of, riding away instantly after he had accomplished it, with the intention of preventing the tragedy he suspected was about to befall the unhappy Kercheval at the hands of Thetford. For this purpose he took the road to Silver-Lead, muffled in his cloak beyond the power of Kercheval to recognize him, expecting to meet him any moment walking home, with Thetford on his traces. He had guessed Kercheval's course correctly. He met him three miles from Silver-Lead, walking sturdily home, his gaunt frame indured with preternatural strength by the consciousness of a great hope for the future, and with eager anticipations of such a reunion with his beloved ones as should lift from their hearts the trouble which so long had bowed them down.

Herman Berthold, a keen-sighted, advanced philosopher, and, by painful and intelligent research, the honest Materialist, had not devoted these precious months of his life to thus mixing himself up in the various fortunes of these people without expecting to elucidate a great truth and to show it indubitably forth to this generation.

Almost as distrustful of the power of man to comprehend or to return a just answer to the grand question, "What is Truth?" as the philosophers of old; who were wont to say to their followers, "We assert nothing—no, not even that we assert nothing," Berthold still clung with stern inflexibility to the cold and stolid theory—that there is no Supreme Being, but a Supreme Power, an Immutible Law; no Providential interposition in the Creation or Progression of the world, but that all is to be explained on the scientific basis of Development. "Creation," he would say, "there is no such thing; the production of all that has been produced does not take place in the abrupt, disconnected way this world would imply. Every act or condition is the result of a preceding act or condition, and of that which is to follow. Creation began, and Nature continues, by Evolution."

By the same logical reasoning he questioned the existence of a special Providence engaged in guiding, prospering, or punishing mortals—a God at the helm of human affairs. He dreamed that he could dissociate the affairs of men from any supernatural influence, explaining all that took place on earth by the law of natural sequence.

"Conduct yourself in your relations with mankind in a certain manner, and such and such effects will follow inevitably," he would say; "conduct yourself in the opposite manner, and the opposite effects will be produced as inevitably. Neither God nor devil is responsible in the remotest degree."

And he constituted himself a sort of Minor Providence over the destinies of these few people who had crossed his path—the Warren-Guiderland heirs, whose heritage he held sus-

pended in his hands, while he investigated their several claims on good fortune.

Smiling at the fatuity of those who, not perceiving him, attributed all that befell these beings to God, he endeavored to mould their destinies with his own hands, awarding to the good their just reward, and to the evil theirs, when the time of probation was over. And as yet all had gone according to his well-laid plans; he had learned the secrets which ruled these lives; he thought he also knew the motives which actuated each and all—the impulses which stirred their hearts; and he smiled coldly as he neared the weak yet estimable man who had wrecked his life for love and who chose to wreck his immortal future—according to his belief—for that same love's sake.

He thought he had only to put his unsuspected hand upon Jonas Kercheval, and that he would stand or proceed as he willed.

He was now to perceive the tangled web caught in his grasp by a Hand that was mightier, and to stand by, stunned, amazed, while Omnipotence worked a miracle.

He reined up across Kercheval's path, and dismounting, stepped close to him, his appearance arranged so that the man at once recognized him as the mysterious stranger who had warned him ten days ago that his secret was known.

Kercheval gazed as if he faced death itself, so unutterably horrified that he had neither sense nor movement for the moment.

After an interval of silence, during which the stranger looked him sternly in the eye, Kercheval groaned out:

"My God! is this man or devil that comes to torture me thus?"

"Bahl! you speak folly, my friend," said Berthold, scornfully. "Your guilty fears make you a child. Had you not committed that bygone offense against the laws of society, would you have seen anything formidable in my approach?"

"That bygone offense?" repeated Kercheval. "Ay, indeed! had it not been for that, no man on earth could have had the power to stop me on an instant on my way to relieve the sufferings of an angel—two angels, my sweet wife and daughter!"

He paused and hung his head, Berthold's ironical glance recalling to him the galling inaccuracy of his last words.

"But what do you want of me?" resumed he, impatiently.

"I wish to discuss this matter fully with you," answered Berthold. "Morality aside, there are consequences involved here which, as a man of sagacity, you are bound to consider."

"Sir, I am willing to risk consequences," said Kercheval, doggedly, turning away.

"You know that the man Gaylure has ferreted out your secret?"

"I know—and care not; let him do his worst."

"And that you may be arrested, imprisoned—disgraced, dishonored?"

"All that I know and am prepared to endure."

"To what purpose, sir?"

"You who know so much probably know also that there is a promise of good fortune in the future for me, which, if I choose to keep my secret a little time longer, I may be able to pass over to those innocent ones whose misery only would be accomplished by my confession at present."

"You are right, I do know this matter. But, do you fully understand that Gaylure's scheme is to secure the fortune to the lady whose gratitude he has purchased by his apparently disinterested protection, and that, if you persist in standing in his way he will sacrifice you as he has the power of doing, through your secret?"

"All that I fully understand; he may drop upon me any hour—shutting me up in a jail and crushing my women under the discovery of my crime, but I intend to risk that, rather than give up my right fortune with which I hope to make their last days at least comfortable."

As Jonas spoke these words with inflexible resolution, the philosopher listening with curious interest to this story of despairing and heroic affection, the clank of horses' hoofs on the turf road caught his fine ear. Thetford was coming on the gallop on his deadly mission.

"Sir, some one comes, permit me to draw you aside for the moment," exclaimed he, and abruptly grasping Kercheval's wrist with a hand soft, cool and nervous. Kercheval found himself impelled by no volition of his own into the edge of the forest, which environed the road, and whose blackness swallowed him, his companion, and the horse up in a moment. As they paused in what appeared to Kercheval to be a cold vaulted place absolutely black with darkness, but in which the scientist moved about as freely as if it was well lit, he heard distinctly a horse gallop past. At the same moment the clasp of Berthold's hand upon his wrist seemed to shoot forth a strange influence, which traversing the veins, communicating with his heart, struck that organ with a shock resembling that produced by an electric contact, and at the moment of electric contact his thought flashed with a visible light across his brain: "A murderer passed by."

It was as if his supernatural vision had been magnified as the corporeal vision is magnified by the microscope, and he had seen the aerial courier which so often announces to us (to our blind wonder) the approach of some altogether unexpected and unthought of person; only in his case he thought of no one whom he knew, but of a formidable and sinister character, whom he recognized under the flash of his momentarily highly sensitive mental vision, as one already stained with blood, and thirsting for his own.

Overcome by the wonder and horror of this unique glimpse into the spirit-world, Kercheval sank swooning at the feet of the mysterious man whose touch had opened the mystic gates.

(To be continued—commenced in No. 355.)

A GREAT MOTHER.—The mother of John Quincy Adams said in a letter to him when he was only twelve:

"I would rather see you laid in your grave than grow up a profane and graceless boy."

Not long before his death a gentleman said to him:

"I have found out who made you."

"What do you mean?" asked Mr. Adams.

The gentleman replied:

"I have been reading the published letters of your mother."

"If," this gentleman relates, "I had spoken that dear name to some little boy who had been for weeks away from his mother his eyes could not have flashed more brightly nor his face glowed more quickly than did the eyes of that venerable old man when I pronounced the name of his mother. He stood up in his peculiar manner and said:

"Yes, sir; all that is good in me I owe to my mother."

St. Valentine's Day.

ST. VALENTINE suffered martyrdom at Rome in the reign of the Emperor Claudius II, by decapitation. He was early canonized by the church, and his memory appears to have deserved the honor, for he was remembered and beloved for his love and charity, those important essentials of Christian practice.

The Pagan Romans celebrated on the 15th of Feb., annually, the feast of Pan. A part of the religious ceremony was to sacrifice two goats and a dog, and to touch with the bloody knife the foreheads of two patrician youths.

These young men were then armed with whips, made of the skin of the goats and dog aforesaid, stripped nearly naked, and directed to run about the streets and strike all persons whom they met. Women were anxious to throw themselves in the way, to get a blow from these representatives of Pan, as it was considered a propitious omen. Afterward the custom degenerated into various less ceremonial observances, among which was the practice of putting names into a cup, and directing youths to draw lots for their future mates. The early Christians, when they could not change customs, adopted and consecrated them. St. Valentine suffered martyrdom in or about the middle of February, and hence came the observance of the 14th of February as St. Valentine's Day.

The 14th of February is now renowned as the day on which birds mate, and youths and maidens feel most potent the magic of the divine passion. Children born on that day are supposed to be special favorites of the winged god; they are supposed to be most tenderly cared for by his beautiful mother, also. Those who receive a token from a beloved one may place it beneath the pillow at night, and a divination is gathered from the dream which follows. Girls may name their two hands after the two admirers best affected, and then plunge them into clear water, and the hand which dries first will indicate the future husband. Young men may put a sprig of evergreen in the button-hole, and should any maiden ask therefore, she is likely to be his wife. Attachments commenced on St. Valentine's holidays, which continue from the 14th to the close of the month, are said to be peculiarly happy and fortunate.

In the last century it was customary on the eve of St. Valentine for English and Scotch to celebrate a festival. An equal number of maids and bachelors got together, each wrote their true or feigned name upon separate pieces of paper, which were folded up, deposited, and drawn by way of lots, the maids taking the men's billets, and the men the maids'; so that each of the young men lit upon a girl he called his valentine and each of the girls a young man whom she styled her valentine. By this means each had two valentines, and the man held fast-er to that which fell to their lot than to those to whom they themselves fell. Balls were subsequently given, the valentines worn upon the bosom or sleeves, and the ladies treated with the utmost consideration.

The revelers were not unmindful that the solemn fasts of Lent were nigh, and the domino was to be exchanged for the penitential robe. They, therefore, made the most of their rejoicings when

Good-morrow! 'tis St. Valentine Day
All in the morning betime,
And I a maid at your window,
To be your Valentine.

saluted them at break of St. Valentine's Day. It is an elegant practice to send genial missives and love tokens upon this day, for such things are thought to be auspicious to the receiver. Indeed a ring presented on that day is believed by many to have all the virtues of a talisman. Whether this be true or not is little to the purpose, so long as pure affections and beautiful hopes are encouraged.

It is the practice of many to send grotesque, rude, and even insulting messages on St. Valentine's festival—a practice which could originate only in vulgar, envious or malignant souls; for it is a desecration of the period and its offices.

A valentine should be complimentary always. It should be a tribute, not a rebuke. It should carry sunshine with it, not shadows. It should not fear to express admiration or love, for its object is always to relieve the heart of some dear, secret, glowing or tender emotion. If you have nothing of this kind to express, be silent.

It may be sportful, also, or witty, but not sarcastic. It must not sting—it must not annoy; nettles and hornets do these, while the office of the valentine is to impart gladness. It may be sent to the married or the single without harm to a virtuous or appreciative heart; for while the sacred relation should debar all vice and folly, it should not frown down an elegant hospitality to what is genial and in itself harmless. The wife whose head is to be turned by a valentine is not worth having, and the sooner a man finds it out the better; while he who is made a noodle of in the same way is a small representative of a man.

The valentine may express simply appreciation, friendliness or devotion, according to the position of the one addressed. A woman of genius is apt to receive many of these tokens, because she represents in herself much that is to be found singly or fragmentarily in others of the sex, but we never know one who has attached any undue importance to these tributes.

Rings, watches and other costly gifts are sometimes inclosed in valentines, but to us the sentiment of appreciation and regard is the more preferable tribute. The following may do as a specimen of the lighter form of a valentine:

TO MY VALENTINE.

BY ELIZABETH OAKES SMITH.

'Twas in the leafy Isle of Paphos,
(Whose every air with love impressing
Laid all the soul in dreams cyprusian.)
Venus, one day her doves caressing,
Saw, bending o'er a glassy stream,
The Graces, quite unused to fishing,
With crystal bowl and eager aim.
A slippery fry intently dishing.
Sweet Venus laughed to see the three
Dart here and there with pretty motion,
As each had slept upon a wave,
And learned their movements from the ocean.
Now up aloft the fish was borne,
And now it floundered in the water.
While all the stream was flushed with light
And all the air was glad with laughter.
"Tis all in vain," bright Venus cried—
"You cannot hold by any art
That slippery thing you think an angel,
But which, in truth, is George's heart."

A gentleman, says Thackeray, is a rarer thing than some of us think for. Which of us can point out in his circle men whose aims are generous; who can look the world in the face, with an equal, manly sympathy for the great and small? We all know a hundred whose coats are well made, and a score who have excellent manners, but of gentlemen, how many? Let us take a scrap of paper and each make his list.

A PETITION.

BY CORA WILBUR.

Bright days that seem with tropic glory freighted!
Ye bring youth's vivid dream
To the lone heart, 'mid wintry silence fated
To see the storm-rays gleam
Afarward the far horizon's lurid glow
Heaven's gathering darkness o'er wide fields of snow.

Rare days of pildness! when sweet spring return-
ing,
Seems o'er the world to smile;
How deeply sad and tender is the yearning
(That seeks the forest aisle)
And dreams the rich, red roses of the June
Unfold 'neath mantle of the glowing noon!

Calm days of splendor! when the winds lie sleeping,
The groves of evergreen
Recall the sunbright joys of harvest reaping,
The summer's royal sheen;
Over the calm white earth is glamour cast,
And memory lives in glories of the past.

Sweet, peaceful days, ye are but passing angels
Of comfort, hope and cheer;
Yet bring your mandate all the love-evangel
That prove our Father near;
E'en fiercely bound by winter's icy chain,
We hail with gladness your brief, joyous reign.

Tarry awhile, bright days with blessings freighted!
Commissioned from above
To bring God's peace unto the lone heart fated
To exile from its love.
Give us the summer's memories sweet and blest,
And grateful psalms intone each faithful breast!

SURE SHOT SETH.

The Boy Rifleman:

OR,

THE YOUNG PATRIOTS OF THE NORTH.

BY OLL COOMES.

AUTHOR OF "IDAHO TOM," "RED BOB," "DA-KOTA DAN," "OLD DAN RACKBACK," ETC.

CHAPTER XXXII.

GONE!

"PULL for your lives! pull, boys! The demons are upon us!" cried Sure Shot Seth, and he bent to the paddle with all his feeble strength.

An exclamation of bitter disappointment escaped Neptune's lips as he turned his canoe and started in pursuit of his friends. But all acted with such precipitous haste that in the darkness and confusion the three canoes became separated.

The red-skins finding their presence was discovered, uttered a fierce war-whoop and pulled with all their strength in hot pursuit; and as the fates would have it, Seth and the maidens, the weakest party, became the victims of the chase. When about twenty rods from the shore they were overtaken and made prisoners despite Seth's heroic efforts.

No sooner had he discovered the inevitable capture of himself and the maidens than he gave the Brigade's well known cry of distress. From different quarters the answer came, and no doubt assistance; but, before he could repeat the cry, a handage was placed over his mouth; then all three were taken into a large canoe and hurried off across the lake. Ten minutes' rapid paddling brought them to the eastern shore, where all landed; and without a moment's hesitation, half a dozen warriors took the captives in custody and hurried them away through the deep, dark woods.

They journeyed eastward toward the Minnesota river, and when a mile or so from the lake, the handage was removed from Seth's mouth, and he given to understand that instant death would be the result of any attempt at escape, or to signal to his companions. The savages knew by bitter experience that the Boy Brigade was directed in all its movements by a perfect code of signals and signs that enabled them to thwart any movement of the enemy and escape any danger that might be in waiting for them. Moreover, they believed the manipulation of this code devolved principally upon the unerring boy rifleman, Sure Shot Seth; hence their great desire to get him into their power.

Seth was fully aware of their bitter, savage animosity toward him; and that the result of his capture would be as cruel a death as the combined and devilish ingenuity of the Boy Chief and his followers could concoct. But he resolved not to give up until the last moment. Although weak in body, he had a double purpose to strengthen and stimulate him in this resolution—self-preservation, and that of Vishnia and Maggie.

His hands were tied at his back, while he was led on by a cord round his neck like a haltered beast. Twice had he tripped, and not having the use of his hands to prevent falling, he went down, jerking the cord, that held him in the ranks, out of the red-skin's hand. Before he could rise, however, the warrior pounced upon him like a hawk and secured the rope. By watching his chances and taking the warrior off his guard, he thought, by making a sudden leap, he might be enabled to jerk away from the foe, and then, with a bound, gain the freedom of the woods under cover of the darkness.

Several miles, however, had been traversed ere this opportunity was afforded. Both the maidens, as well as himself, were nearly exhausted with their forced march. The surrounding circumstances were not favorable, but he resolved to make the attempt; so, summoning all his strength, he made the leap, springing abruptly to one side. The rope was jerked from the red-skin's hand, and Seth was free. One bound carried him beyond reach of the enemy's grasp; but at the next, the earth seemed to open before him, and the Boy Rifleman felt himself falling downward into the black jaws of some unknown depths.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

A DROP SCENE.

A FEW miles east of Lake Luster was a valley opening upon the Minnesota river, known thereabouts as the Deer-Drive Valley. The name belonged to the nomenclature of the west, and possessed an aptness in its application. At the river the valley was nearly a mile wide, with low bluffs; but as it receded into the woods it grew narrower, and the bluffs more precipitous—finally terminating in a rift or narrow gorge, with perpendicular walls of rocks. In years past, the Indians had used this valley for killing deer by driving them in at the river and then forcing them into the head or rather the neck of the valley from whence there was no escape alive. Hence the name, Deer-Drive Valley. Of late years, however, it had never been visited for this purpose; for, since the establishing of the Yellow Medicine Agency, most of the game had been driven out of the woods by the Indians and white hunters together; and as there was nothing in the rugged solitude of the valley to command even passing interest, it was seldom visited.

It was an admirable hiding-place, as long as one was not hunted there, and, conscious of

this fact, three persons who have figured in our story heretofore, took advantage of it.

These three persons were, Rube Johnson, Gus Stewart, and Ches Pagan, lately the followers of the notorious Ivan Le Clercq.

It will be remembered that we left these boys in the council with the Boy Chief on the margin of the Black Woods, which terminated in the death of Abe Thorne. Since that time they had been wanderers, as it were, upon the face of the earth, pursued by the demon of vengeance, and haunted by the soul-destroying canker, remorse. Still believing that they were criminal accessories to Seth March's death, the assassination of their own companion, who had the moral courage to renounce their conduct, had added another pang to those already gnawing at the very vitals of their being. Their minds had become so terrified and excited that they started like guilty, conscience-stricken things at every sound. The stealthy steps of the administrators of justice could be heard, in imagination, at any moment. Every bush and copse seemed pervaded with a silence as if doing duty as a covert to an enemy lying in wait for them. Wherever they turned, that terrible Nemesis kept before them. No place seemed safe from the intrusion of the wild, haggard demon of vengeance. Their inclination to flee—to keep going on and on, like that of the Wandering Jew, grew upon them. But at length, grown tired and foot sore from long wandering, they crept into the head of the Deer-Drive, and there hid themselves.

It is true, their leader in sin, Ivan Le Clercq, had offered them immunity in the Indian encampment, but his cold-blooded and cowardly assassination of Abe Thorne filled them with abject fear of him; and they fled, from him and his followers as from all others. Everybody and everything they now regarded as enemies, and miserable, dejected, and haggard-looking beings that they were, hiding and skulking from the vengeance of man, only to encounter that of God, they hovered close together in their concealment and spoke in subdued and hollow tones.

They had made a good selection of the many hiding places offered them in the vicinity. They had encamped in the narrow neck of the Deer-Drive, where the walls were fully a hundred feet high and not over twenty feet apart. Over this rift nature had thrown a covering as wonderful and intricate as the gossamer web of the spider. From the facade of each perpendicular bluff, a multitude of parasitical vines had grown out, and from the very bottom had the rift grown full of these slender creepers. Years had lent their growth to these vines which had become interlaced and matted into a perfect net-work, into which no human eye could penetrate ten feet.

The young fugitives made their way through these vines to the very end of the chamber, or rift. There they found themselves in darkness; but a pine torch was readily procured, when, with their knives, they set to work clearing a large space—crowding the severed branches and twigs back into the spongy mass. They cut the vines as high as they could reach, and when their task was completed they felt somewhat elated over the result. In the dim glow of the torch the surrounding walls all seemed of a solid mass, so evenly had the vines been cut. The ground beneath their feet was hard, gravelly and dry, though a little stream found a source in a cool, limpid spring within five feet of their retreat.

Laying in a supply of venison and some pine faggots for fire, the trio felt that they would be safe for a few days, at least, in the Deer-Drive. They passed their time in lamenting the course they had pursued, and in pondering over the fate of their friends at the Agency. It was night, and a dim, feeble light from a sputtering torch pervaded their novel retreat. The day had worn wearily by, and they found themselves there after two days' confinement, suffering the pangs of inactivity as well as of fear and terror.

"Boys," said Rube Johnson, "this layin' 'round in these holes is gittin' to be intolerable to me. I've either got to get out of here, else you'll have a dead rogue on hands to bury."

"We'd all be better off dead," said Ches Pagan, sadly.

"Yes; poor Abe Thorne is out of all this trouble," added Gus Stewart, in a tone that seemed full of regret and anguish.

"Probably if we'd all not been cowards, and done as Abe resolved to do, we'd be happy to-night with our folks," said Rube; "but like the fools that we were, we didn't dare to oppose Ivan, and so here we are, sufferin' worse than if we'd gone boldly up and acknowledged our sin and received our punishment. But we hung back, and let Abe's death add another sin to our list of wrongs."

"But we didn't kill him," said Pagan.

"I know it, Ches; but it grew out of that Sure Shot Seth affair in which we were all concerned. There is no gittin' out of Seth's death; we all helped to tie him up, and if Ivan was leader, he wouldn't suffer for it any worse than us."

"I can't see where Abe's death is chargeable to us," said young Stewart.

"It isn't directly, of course; but it will give weight to Seth's death, and there'd be no help for us if Maggie and Emma seen us tie Seth to the tree, and his death becomes known."

"It's a damned wonder we didn't accept Ivan's proposition to go and capture the girls and carry them off to the Indians."

"It was easy enough for me to refuse him," said Gus Stewart; "I have done all the dirty work I want to with Ivan Le Clercq. He has nothing to lose in deserting the whites, for he has no friends there; but with us it is different. Mother often told me that Ivan would get me into trouble if I didn't quit runnin' with him. Now I wish I'd minded her."

"That's just what my mother told me," said Ches.

"And mine, too," added Rube.

"Would to Heaven we had obeyed our friends," continued Gus, the penitent tears gathering in his eyes.

"Yes; it would have been so much better," sighed Rube.

A silence now came over the unhappy trio. There was not a dry eye in the party. The thoughts of home and the word mother had overcome all other feelings, and they gave way to the emotions of their better nature, and together wept bitterly.

A deep, unnatural silence surrounded them. Not a sound was heard save the melancholy chirruping of a cricket, and the soft bubbling of the little spring near could be heard; and even these had become so monotonous to the fugitives that they seemed incorporated into the solemn stillness of the place.

Suddenly Rube Johnson sprang to his feet, a look of wild terror upon his face.

His companions followed his example.

The three exchanged startled glances—they seemed speechless. But their looks spoke plain enough.

A strange sound had burst suddenly upon their ears. It was the sound of a heavy body crashing down through the tangled vines overhead.

"Boys!" cried Rube, "we have been discovered."

"And our enemies are trying to crush us by rollin' something down upon us. Oh, my God! when will this end?" cried young Stewart.

"I fear never," added Ches Pagan.

The sound of the falling body had ceased, as if arrested by the great web of vines; but it was soon resumed again. Down, down, crashing and tearing it came, nearer and nearer. It seemed to be bringing the whole mass of parasites with it. The boys saw the top of their retreat quiver and sway. The falling mass was near them; but so terrified were they that they stood as if rooted to the spot, gazing with distended eyes upward. And at length a pair of human feet, incased in moccasins, appeared through the roof above them. They were followed by a pair of legs clad in buckskin leggings. Slowly downward, as if twisting and struggling through the brushy mass, the body continued to descend until the feet touched the ground. Then the parasites, which clung to the head and shoulders of the intruder like leeches, let go and sprung back to their former position, trembling and rustling.

With speechless horror the fugitives gazed upon the stranger who stood with back toward them. His hands were tied at his back and his clothing torn and tattered. For a moment he stood as if bewildered by the dazzling torch-light, then he turned and faced the trio of terrified boys.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

RENEGADES TO THE RESCUE!

"My Lord!" burst from Gus Stewart's lips.

"A ghost!" added Ches Pagan, shivering.

"The ghost of Sure Shot Seth," gasped Rube Johnson.

The trio shrunk back amazed and horrified.

A smile mounted the face of the ghost; his lips moved, and these words were plainly articulated:

"Boys, how's this?"

"It's him in the flesh and spirit," said Rube.

"It is for a fact, boys; but I thought I'd tumbled over into the fathomless pit," continued Sure Shot Seth, his mind relieved of a terrible load.

Rube, Gus and Ches drew a long breath of relief, straightened up and assumed a look more human and free of terror. They felt like new beings.

"We thought you were dead," said Rube.

"I know you did, boys; but I'm not. If you'll just free my hands back here I'll tell you how I happened here," replied Seth, doubtful of their attitude toward him.

Rube took his knife and set the Boy Rifle-man at liberty.

Seth's face and hands were terribly scratched and lacerated by the vines; but he paid no attention to these wounds, and, having gazed around him in a sort of a doubt, he asked:

"Where the plague are we, anyhow?"

"In the head of Deer-Drive," answered Rube.

"Ah, indeed! I remember the place now," Seth responded, with a light of recognition beaming in his eyes; "it's a snug hiding-place; but I had a thundering time getting down here to it."

"Were you thrown over the precipice?" asked Rube.

"Why do you ask that question?" asked Seth.

"Your hands were bound."

"Yes; but the red-skins bound them, and in order to get away from them I jumped over the embankment; but I didn't know where I was going till I was on my way. Fortunately, the vines broke the force of the fall, and let me down easy by jerks."

"Then there are red-skins about?"

"I left a party of six up at the top of this rift. But you have nothing to fear of them, have you?"

"And why not?" questioned Rube.

"Your friend, Ivan Le Clercq, is their leader."

"We know it; but we have renounced him as a bad character; and believing you had been murdered, after trying you to that tree the other day, we have been hiding away through fear of punishment."

"Well, I wanted you to suffer in conscience for that mean caper; for Maggie Harris and Emma Milbank told me who you were, if you did wear masks. The girls set me at liberty, and a few minutes after the Indians came that way, and but for their I would now be dead."

"But that skeleton—"

"I tied a dead Indian up to the tree and the wolves helped me out with the deception," explained Seth, a smile mounting his face.

An exclamation of surprise and joy burst from the lips of the trio. Rube Johnson advanced toward Seth with outstretched hand and said:

"Seth, can you forgive?—will you forgive me?"

"With all my heart, Ruben, I forgive you," said Seth, taking the proffered hand; "for I feel certain that you have suffered in conscience for your conduct, and will profit by it."

"God only knows what we have suffered, Seth. Hell couldn't invent more excruciating tortures than we have undergone," Rube affirmed, stoutly.

Gus and Ches both advanced and asked the forgiveness of the young borderman; and when it had been granted, the souls of these three boys seemed metamorphosed into different beings. Instead of that furtive, haggard look, the joyful radiance of a cleansed soul beamed upon every lineament of the face; and the hollow, depressed sound of their voices changed into the clear, happy and metallic ring of youth.

Sure Shot Seth had been a benefactor to them—a being of divine mercy.

"I hope, Seth," Johnson at length remarked, "that you'll press us into your service, so we can make up for our meanness toward you on the day of the shooting match. I know you'd 'a' won the rifle if you 'a' got a shot against them fellers."

"I did win it," said Seth.

"Not that day; a stranger-lad callin' himself the Eaglet won it."

Seth indulged in a low pleasant laugh, then said:

"I was the Young Eaglet from Sky-Puncher-Pook."

"You!" exclaimed the trio in amazement.

"Yes," Maggie Harris and Emma Milbank had overheard you plotting against me the day before the match; and so they had it all arranged as to how you were to be beaten. But poor Maggie! she is in the power of the savages again. They captured her, another maiden and myself last night, and we were marched off this way—"

"Then the girls and their captors are near here?"

"When I left them, they were at the top of this rift."

"Then the red-skins 'll be apt to be lookin' after you."

"Yes; and I presume the sooner I get out of here, the better it 'll be for me."

"If you think you can trust us, Seth, count on us to help rescue the girls," said Rube.

"I will be only too glad to have you assist me. The Brigade is back in the vicinity of Lake Luster, and if I should wait till I hunt them up, the savages with the girls will be beyond our reach."

"Then lead the way and we'll follow," said Gus.

"I know not which way to lead to get out of this place," was his answer.

"Then come along," said Rube, taking up his rifle and entering the dense canopy of foliage.

The four made their way out of the thicket and passing down the valley, climbed the bank and set off in search of the savages.

The three boys were well armed with rifles and revolvers, and furnished Seth with an outfit. They crept back to the head of the valley where he had escaped from the red-skins, expecting to find the latter somewhere about. But in this they were disappointed. No trace of them was to be found.

As the savages would be compelled to cross the Minnesota in order to reach their stronghold, Seth supposed, from the course taken after leaving the lake, that they were aiming for what was known as Fagan's Ferry, where a number of boats were usually to be found. Acting upon this supposition, he and his new-made friends set off for that point. They did not travel in a direct line, but bent their way a little to the right so as to not run upon the foe should they be on their way to the ferry. They traveled rapidly, to make up time lost and to get in ahead of the savages at the river. But in this they were disappointed. The red-skins had preceded them to the ford by several minutes; and had just embarked with the captives, in a flat-boat belonging to the ferry, for the opposite shore as they came up.

"Too late!" exclaimed Seth, his voice full of bitter disappointment as he looked upon the expanse of water that separated them from the enemy.

(To be continued—commenced in No. 352.)

A MEMORY.

BY MRS. ADDIE D. ROLLSTON.

One night when the spirit of sadness had clouded my sweetest heart-dreams, I said in my passionate sorrow—

"No light o'er my lonely way gleams; For others the glow of the sunshine— For others the gladness of day— But for me there is nothing to brighten The gloom of the cheerless way!"

A whisper came back through the stillness, A vow that was breathed long ago, When the skies of the summer were gleaming, And the roses o'er the waves were afloat: The wearisome moments crept backward, And out on the beautiful bay

Our boat swept the silvery waters In the glow of the blossoming day.

The lilies shone white in the shadows, And over the purple-crowned hills Came the sound of the south wind's music As it swept o'er the mountain rills; And the sunbeams danced in the ferns and flowers, That trothed in my world-weary brain, And it stole o'er my brow with a soothing touch Like the freshness of summer rain.

I had longed for the sun's fierce splendor To sink in the crimson west, And for the shadows of twilight That bringeth sweet quiet and rest; I watched for the silver star of eve To rise o'er the mountain gray, And the somber mantle of night to fall O'er the light of the beautiful day.

And then in the moonlight tender We floated down the bay, And one by one the stars came out, And the moonbeams o'er the water lay: Ah! dearer than all the moments That maketh our youth-time bright, Is the memory of that hour Of love and the starry night!

The way has been long and weary, And darling I long for rest; And I would lean my tired head On your sheltering, loving breast And dream of the days of olden days, That covers the sweetest long years, There is yet for my heart something better Than sorrow and passionate tears.

Walking the Plank.

AN OLD SAILOR'S YARN.

BY GEORGE W. BROWNE.

"Yes, boy, durin' my forty years o' sea life, I've had menny narrer 'scapes from death. But I believe the toughest fix I was ever in was when I walked the plank on the pirate vessel, Ocean Ranger, in the South Sea. And es I'll take but a leetle while, I will spin the yarn, if you'd like to hear it."

"Of course I would like to hear it, for I knew that a story from the old sea-dog, Jack Lawrence, would be worth listenin' to; so I told him to go ahead, which he did, as follows:

"In '48 I shipped es second mate on the Boston Hellice, bound fur the East Indies. She was es trim, staunch a ship es I have ever met with, and with old Captain Burton es our skipper, everything seemed favorable fur a pleasant voyage. Thus, with the good wishes o' our friends, we weighed anchor, and soon we'd left land far behind us.

"Well, nothing occurred to break the monotony of the voyage, until we'd crossed the Line, and war in the Southern Ocean, when fur three days we lay becalmed.

"Toward sunset o' the third day, a speck was seen upon the western sky that looked no bigger than one's hand. But it soon commenced to grow larger, and with such rapidity, that, afore the sun was fairly out o' sight, it hovered the hull heave. And the sea, that was but a short time afore so calm, was now lashed to fury, and the foam-capped waves dashed angrily against the ship.

"Though the squall came up suddint and unexpected, yet we managed to get the ship in es good trim es possible afore it struck; and nobly did the old Hellice bear up 'gainst the mad gale. But in spite o' all this, we know'd that the ship must come a hull afore long, the old ship there durin' men on board, I see'd none but wed pale faces and shaking limbs, es they lashed 'emselves to the riggin' to keep from bein' washed overboard, es wave after wave swept the deck.

"Night soon set in, pitchy dark; but the tempest hed 'bated somewhat, and most of the danger was s'posed to be passed. I hed jest cut the rope with which I hed lashed myself to the main riggin', in order to keep upon my feet durin' the gale, when I felt sumthin' strike me on the head, and I was hurled headfirst into the sea.

"I am a good swimmer; and es soon es I recovered from the effects of the blow I hed received, I struck out in the direction I s'posed the ship was, a-shoutin' fur help.

"At fast I thought nothin' serious o' my situation, not doubtin' that I should soon be picked up by the ship; but afore long I see'd that I war mistaken, and thet, owin' to the

darkness, my chance was a mighty small one. So I swum on faster than ever, and shouted still louder fur help, till I hed no strength to swim further, and was so hoarse that I could barely speak out loud. Once I fancied that I heard a shout; but though I quickly answered it, I heard no more, and so concluded that I must hev bin mistaken.

"When I was so exhausted that I could barely keep above water, and hed given up all hope o' reachin' the ship, sumthin' washed up 'gainst me, which at first I took to be a boat. But when I kem to grab hold o' it, I found that it was not a boat but a men-coop, thet hed either got washed off the ship, or else bin throw'd overboard for me by the crew. Howsumever, knowin' that it war my only chance fur life, I quickly mounted it, and found quite a comfortable seat. Thus I floated all that night, anxiously listenin' fur some sound o' the ship.

"Mornin' kem at last; and with the fast streak o' light, I eagerly scanned the blue expanse o' water, that encircled me on every hand. But soon my hopes were turned to despair, fur not a trace o' the old ship was in sight. Then the fearfulness o' my situation burst full upon me! and it seemed thet, indeed, I was lost!

"Fur four nights and three days I floated upon the broad ocean, without a drop to drink or a crumb to eat, sufferin' almost unendurable pangs o' thirst, and with death seemin' to stare me in the face! But hopeless war my watches, vain war my prayers fur a sail to throw in sight, until the mornin' o' the fourth day, when my feverish vision was greeted by the sight o' a ship thet hed come up in the night, and was bearin' directly down upon me. With some difficulty I managed to signal to her; and soon hed the satisfaction o' seein' a boat put out towards me. Of what followed, however, I can give but a faint idee. I hev a dim recollection o' bein' taken aboard the boat, and o' bein' carried on deck o' a strange ship; and then, I know'd no more.

"I was aboard the ship a week afore I was able to do any duty. Durin' thet time I was 'pon deck but leetle, and hed not found out the character o' the ship thet hed picked me up, though I had a suspicion thet they war sumthin' 'bout it thet was not right. However, that p'int was quickly settled one day, by the captain sayin' to me, arter cautiously beatin' 'round the bush awhile, thet I hed bin picked up by a pirate ship, and es they war short o' hands I mus' jine them.

"Old Jack Lawrence ain't the man to turn pirate fur nothin', and when the captain asked me to, I told him at onc'e I'd not do it. Then he flared up in a minnit, and swore thet I sh'd do it or die. Es I had no pertickler desire to die jest then, and arter thinkin' it over a minnit, I concluded it war best to giv' 'long es easy es possible. So, at last, I told him that I would jine 'em. But, at the same time, I hed made up my mind thet it would be only till I could find some chance o' escape. Howsumever, es he didn't know thet part, he seemed mighty pleased with my decision, and took me 'pon deck at onc'e, when I see'd that the black flag had bin h'isted, and I know'd thet I was fairly in fur it.

"I've met with some rough characters in my day, but the toughest set I ever see'd was the officers and crew o' that pirate ship, Ocean Ranger. There wasn't a decent person in the hull gang, 'ceptin' one, a youngster named Charley Gray, who, es he one day told me, was the only survivor of the last ship thet the pirates hed overhauled, and hed, like myself, bin pressed into their service. Somehow, the boy took a great fancy to me, and I made up my mind thet if I ever hed a chance to git away, I would take him 'long with me.

"I didn't find the life of a pirate es agreeable es I'd hev wished, but, es I hed made up my mind to make the best o' it, I got 'long without enny trouble. But not so with Charley. The first mate seemed to hev some special spite 'gainst him. And takin' advantage o' Charley's ignorance o' sailor life he giv'd him menny hard words and blows. It made my blood bile to see the boy abused so, and, o' course, I helped him all I c'd. But in spite o' thet he hed a hard time o' it.

"One day, when Charley hed failed to do the work the mate hed given him, because he didn't know how, that worthy ordered him to be tied up, and hev fifty lashes.

"Thus far I hed sed nothin' to the mate concernin' his conduct to the boy. But I c'd stand no more, and, regardless o' the consequences, I asked him ef he was not a leetle hasty, and tried to reason with him. My stars! the minnit I spoke, he turned and glaring upon me fur an instant, hissed out sumthin' 'bout my 'tendin' to his own business, and with the flat o' his hand struck me full in the face!

"The blow o' the pirate maddened me. And forgettin' my situation—forgettin' everythin' but the insult heaped upon me—I rushed upon the scoundrel sneak, and with a single blow felled him to the deck!

"Es the mate staggered to his feet, a wild, revengeful light glared from his bloodshot eyes, and I expected thet he would kill me on the spot. But jest then the captain kem on deck, and es soon es he found out the trouble he told the mate to hold on a minnit; and ordered the crew to take me pris'ner. That was quickly done, es it was useless fur me to offer resistance; and then, gatherin' around me in a circle, they commenced, in loud and threatening tones, to discuss the manner in which I sh'd die, fur havin' dared to raise my hand against a superior.

"The others not bein' able to agree upon the manner of my death, the captain proposed thet I sh'd walk the plank. This was quickly agreed to, and preparation was made at onc'e to that effect.

"While the pirates war gittin' ready to carry out their plans, I hed time to think over the folly o' my hastiness. But I didn't regret it much, es I didn't consider thet I was much worse off than I was afore. And ef it hadn't bin fur Charley I sh'dn't have cared a whit, ef I c'd only hev got another lick at thet cussid mate.

"The pirates soon found a suitable plank, and placin' it on the deck ran it out over the rail es far es they c'd, and make it balance. Then, with hands securely lashed behind me, I was led for'ard and told to walk off it.

"I hed taken three steps for'ard when I hesitated. One more and the plank would tip! I tell ye, boy, men may talk o' facin' death, but they don't know what it is till they have done it. I'm not afraid to die, but still I did hate to go down in thet shape. And es my thoughts went back to my distant home, and the fond mother anxiously waitin' fur my return, I turned to the crew, hopin' there might be, at least, one look o' pity fur me. But, no; those hard-set, swarthy features all bore a smile o' satisfaction at seein' my misery; and I doubted not, w'd exult over my death. Resolved to die like a man, I gave one look at the weepin' boy, and raised my foot to take the fatal step.

"Before I hed time to take the step, which was to send me into eternity, there kem the cry o' 'Sail 'O!' from the man on the look-out,

which stopped me abrupt in my course, and sent a thrill o' hope through me.

"Sure enough, there was a ship in plain sight, and bearin' directly down upon us. She hev'n' come up directly in the wake o' the sun, she kem near overhauin' us, afore we hed sighted her.

"What do ye make o' her?" asked the captain o' the mate, who 'ed the glass.

"She's an English man-o'-war," sed the mate, es he handed him the glass.

"Fur an instant the captain looked at the stranger, and then, with a pale face as death, he turned to his crew and sed:

"Boys, put on every atom o' sail the Ranger can bear. We must show the Englishman a light pair o' heels. 'Tis our only chance fur life!

"Overboard, dog!" thundered the captain to me, es soon es he had given his orders to the crew.

"There was no other alternative fur me. To turn back was es sure death from the pirates. So, with a prayer upon my lips, I took the fatal step—the plank tipped—and I was hurled head-first into the sea!

"When the plank tipped, sendin' me inter the sea, I hed no more idee thet I sh'd live to tell o' it than es ef I hed never bin born. But it seems thet my time hedn't come. And when I kem to the surface my head struck against sumthin' hard, which I soon see'd was the plank thet hed slid inter the water arter me. Suddenly a thought flashed through my mind thet if I c'd git upon thet plank I might keep afloat till the man-o'-war c'd pick me up. So, es a drownin' man will ketch at anything to save his life, I tried to git onto thet plank, till I managed to do it; and then I found but leetle trouble in keepin' afloat till a boat from the man-o'-war—which, es the commander told me, hed kept watch o' me from the time I left the pirate ship—picked me up. Es the pirates had all they c'd 'tend to in gittin' away from the man-o'-war I do not think thet they thought o' me arter I went overboard.

"The next mornin' the man-o'-war overhauled the pirates. And all thet war not killed in the fight war strung up at the yard-arm. Of course I looked out fur Charley; and when the prize-money kem to be divided he and I got a liberal share.

"A fortnight later we hailed a homeward-bound ship; and Charley and I engaged passage fur Boston. And, in due course o' time, we arrived at home in safety, much to the surprise o' our friends, who war not expectin' us so soon. But when we kem to tell our story, they war more surprised to think thet we got home at all."

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A SHADY NIGHT.

BY JOE JOY, JR.

Every one thought 'twas the last night indeed,
Dyed dead and darker than any need;
It was a double up palmed night,
In which a black cat would have looked white,
And a man who was struck with an iron bar
Over the eyes would have not seen a star.

The darkness prevented people's talk,
And you had to creep it off the walk.
The lights couldn't shine, it was so thick,
While men ran against the lamp-posts quick,
Nor saw it even though they would scratch
The very brightest Lucifer match.

I tell you the truth that every mouse
Put on spectacles 'round the house,
The very cheese they lost the sight of;
'Twas darkness not to be made light of;
And man whose eyes were of the best kind
Couldn't see near as much as those who were blind.

Down-street the dark rolled in a tide,
And you could climb upon it and ride:
You had to bore a hole in it
Before a lantern would shine a bit;
A calcium-light could not make a streak,
And you couldn't tell the day of the week.

It was too dark to try to think,
And you couldn't even see to wink;
You pushed against it going down street,
And knocked down every man you'd meet,
And make a mistake with your hand and sock it,
Ten to one, in your comrade's pocket.

It was so dark that old men or youth
Couldn't see how to tell the truth;
And you could stir it with a spoon;
It looked like there never had been a moon;
And any one out on a lark
Could very easily keep in the dark.

Everybody seemed "going it blind,"
And your very mouth was hard to find,
And then you met though it no shame
If you would ask them what was your name;
And a house burned down across the way,
And I never knew it until to-day.

It took six candles to hunt for one,
And, strange to say, it took the sun
All day the dark to dissipate,
But when last night men went home late
Their wives would meet and kiss them, and say
"Darling, I'm sure you lost your way."

Cavalry Custer,

From West Point to the Big Horn;
OR,
THE LIFE OF A DASHING DRAGON.

BY LAUNCE POYNTZ,

AUTHOR OF "LANCER AND LASSO," "THE
SWORD-HUNTERS," ETC.

I WRITE these sketches for the young men of America, for the people of the land Custer loved so much in his life, for the people who would gladly know more about him now that he is gone. We have all heard much of this man within the past year, when his terrible but glorious death made him the mourning of a whole nation. Few of us, however, know much more of him than this, that he was a celebrated, dashing cavalry general, who wore long curls and who was always charging the enemy.

He won so many victories, and was so uniformly successful, that he was supposed to be assisted by a wonderful good fortune, that the world called "Custer's Luck." Before we begin let us lay aside that idea. It is God's will, and our own activity or laziness, that leads to what we call "luck." In the case of Custer, we shall soon see in what his good fortune mainly consisted, and can begin the story of his life with his name.

George Armstrong Custer was born in a village in Harrison county, Ohio, almost at the edge of Pennsylvania. It is ten chances to one if you can find the place on an ordinary map. In the midst of Harrison county is the county seat, Cadiz, and a few miles off, at the meeting of some country roads, is a little village called New Rumley. There Custer was born, thirty-seven years ago, on the 6th December, 1839, in a little cottage. His father was the village blacksmith, who took to farming soon after his boy's birth, and at New Rumley young Custer was brought up, on the farm, like many another poor man's son, going to country district-school. They always called him Autie or Armstrong in those days. Somehow or other his middle name was preferred by all his friends, all through his life.

Of course we all want to know what sort of a boy Autie was. There were several remarkable things about him. He was a frank, honest, manly boy, always full of fun; could run faster, jump further, wrestle better than any other boy of his class. He was a boy all over, and got into plenty of mischief, as boys will. How many pairs of pantaloons he tore, climbing trees and vaulting fences, I dare not calculate. Out of school he was the best catcher at base-ball in that part of the county, and there was not a fellow of his size could throw him wrestling.

But he never got into a mean scrape, never lied, and, what is more remarkable still, never had a single fight in all his boy life.

Autie Custer grew up like other boys, strong and hearty. When he was twelve his eldest sister married, and became Mrs. Reed. She left New Rumley with her husband to go out to Monroe, Michigan, and asked her father to let Autie come with her for a year or two. Father Custer consented, and Autie went "out West," to Monroe, where he stayed at school till he was nearly sixteen.

Monroe is on the western shore of Lake Erie, just half way between Detroit and Toledo. It is quite an old place, and there was once a great battle close to it, in the war of 1812, between the British forces under General Proctor, assisted by the Indian chief Tecumseh, on one side, and a force of Kentucky Mounted Riflemen on the other, under General Winchester. The Americans were surprised at Monroe, which was then called "Frenchtown," and the end of it was that they were all massacred by the Indians.

Autie Custer used very often to go down to the little River Raisin, which runs through Monroe, to the spot where the battle was fought, while he looked at the place where the poor fellows had retreated over the river on the ice, on that terrible winter's day, only to find themselves slaughtered at last. It was there that he first conceived the idea of becoming a soldier, to defend the frontier farmers against just such terrible disasters as the massacre of the River Raisin.

It was now the year 1856, and Autie was sixteen. He had learned all that they could teach him at school. Had he cared for nothing but play he would never have been anything in after-life. As it was, at sixteen he came back to New Rumley, as full of fun as ever, but having learned so much that he could make his living teaching school.

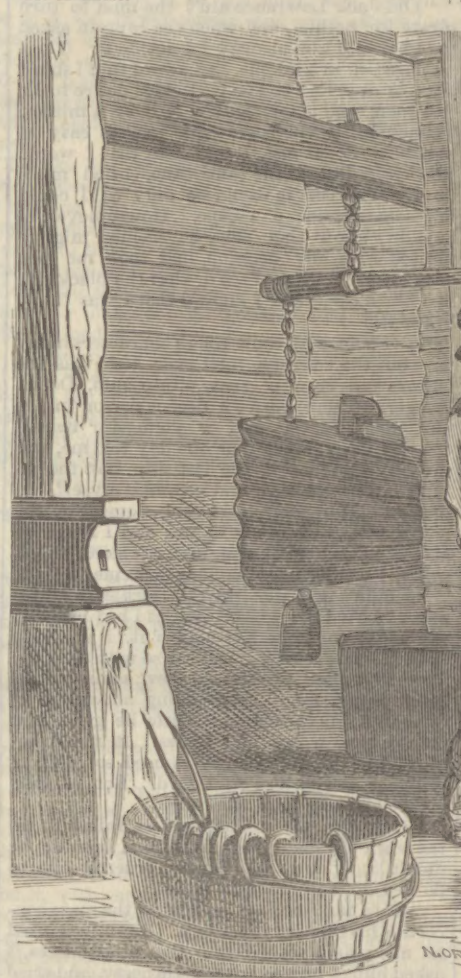
It was through this that he got into West Point and became the great soldier he was when he died, so the story is worth listening to. We all know that West Point is the great military school of America, where they train up officers, but that's about the sum of our knowledge. It was all Custer knew then, but

he had made up his mind he would go to West Point if he could. He had heard that each member of Congress had the power to send one person there, and that there was some examination to be passed. He did not personally know any member of Congress, but he knew who the member from his district was. So he wrote to that member a short, manly letter, telling him he was very anxious to go to West Point, and asking Mr. Bingham whether there was a vacancy and what were the qualifications required.

Observe here, one thing. Custer did not trust to friends, politics, or influence, to get what he wanted. He went to the fountain-head, and asked for it. If any reader of these lines wants to go to West Point or Annapolis, let him do the same. Write straight to the member of Congress for your district. If he does not answer, or says "no," decidedly, give it up. You cannot get into West Point. If you trust to friends, you may be kept waiting for months, only to be refused at last. If you write to headquarters, you are soon out of your troubles, one way or the other. Custer found it so.

There was a vacancy, but another young man from the next county had applied for it, and Bingham wrote to Custer, telling him that if this young man failed to pass the examination, he would give the next chance to Custer. The examination was in January, and it was then May. There were eight long, weary months to wait before he would know. Custer kept on teaching all the time, and every Saturday went to school himself to the Normal School. He made up his mind that when the examination came, he would be ready for it. The young man from Jefferson county thought himself all safe, as Mr. Bingham had promised him the appointment. The time came, and this confident young man was "plucked," that is, failed to pass the examination. Then, in went young Custer, and never missed a question. His eight months' work had paid him well. He found himself a cadet in the United States service, with a certain future before him, and a chance to do almost anything.

Suppose he had given up the fight to that young man, and neglected his studies, he would not have been ready for his opportunity. As it was, when it came, it found him able to take it. Had it not come, his year's study would have made him a better teacher, able to command a higher salary. So you see, Custer's "luck" consisted here in getting ready in time. The other young man's "bad luck" was—his laziness.



George assisting his father in "the shop."

Now Custer really had to go to school in earnest for four long years at West Point. First, they drilled him to march with the other cadets, in line and column, carrying a musket, sometimes at a walk, sometimes running, always in exact line with the rest, heads up, toes out, till he was nearly tired out. This was in the June encampment, when the cadets sleep in tents. Then he was sent into barracks, and all the winter he had to study algebra, geometry, surveying, French, Spanish, and military history, the only relief being drill, drill, drill.

So passed a year, when he rose a class, and had still harder studies, while his drill was changed to leading big guns and learning to ride in the riding-school. Some people think that must have been fun, anyway, the riding-lessons, but these folks wouldn't think so at West Point. They ride for business there, not pleasure. The class is mounted on great troop horses, old fellows with hard mouths, horses that are used to being ridden by a dozen different people every week, and which know all the most effectual tricks to get a rider off. For a little while the pupils ride slowly round the school in file, horses all fully saddled, cadets sitting upright. Then the riding-master halts them and tells them to "cross stirrups." Every cadet must take his feet out of the stirrups, and throw them across the saddle, so as to ride entirely by balance, or by clinging with the knees to the hard, slippery saddle. Then away goes the long file at a hard trot, jog, jog, all round the ring. Then the cadets begin to tumble off, and by the time the lesson is over, hardly one has escaped a tumble. That's the way they learn to ride at West Point, by tumbling off till they can stick on at any pace, on any horse, and then they are free of all horse creation. It ends by leaving these young West Point cadets splendid horsemen, and Custer soon became one of the best there.

But I did not intend to dwell long upon West Point, except to show how Custer was trained to become what he became in after life. He went in, June, 1857, a gay boy, full of spirits; he came out, June, 1861, a brave officer, a perfect horseman, a good shot, a good swordsman, understanding infantry, cavalry, and artillery, able to command, having learned by sticking to his work at school, watching his chance, and not being afraid to speak up for what he wanted.

His only piece of real good fortune in all this time was in finding a vacancy at West Point, and finding Mr. Bingham willing to give it to

him. Those were things not due to himself, but everything else was the fruit of his own hard work.

At the close of Custer's career in West Point, however, one other thing occurred to him, not the result of his own exertions, but of something over which he had no control. This was the breaking out of the great civil war, which began just at the very time that Custer graduated, and which affected his future very seriously. Before 1861, the cadets had to stay five years in West Point, at the end of which time they were examined by a board of visitors and graduated. The successful ones were then put on probation in regiments as "brevet second lieutenants," where they generally served at least a year before they were promoted to second lieutenants. The army was very small, only sixteen thousand men, the officers few in number, only about twelve hundred in all, and the Academy used to graduate about sixty officers every year. So it was very hard to find places for all the graduates, and they had to wait for vacancies, living meanwhile, as extra officers by brevet. When a man became second lieutenant at last, he had to wait another long, weary time before he became a first lieutenant, and at least ten years before he became a captain. No matter how many brave deeds he might do, it would not help him a bit any more than it does now. He could not be promoted, simply because there was no vacancy above him, and the only way to create a vacancy is to kill an officer or get him to resign.

This slowness of promotion in a small regular army, is one of the reasons why army officers always wish for war. It kills off the colonels, and majors, and captains, and leaves vacancies to be filled by the second lieutenants. Before Custer's time there had only been one war since West Point was founded. This was the Mexican war in 1846-7 which had been the means of promoting over so many young graduates to high stations in the army while it lasted; but since that all the officers had to do was to stay around frontier forts on the plains, with an occasional skirmish with the Indians, where no one was much hurt. This made promotion very slow, officers very lazy, and as a consequence led many of them into bad habits to while away the time. This is the case, now, owing to the same causes. Put a man into a little post on the plains, with hardly any one to talk to, and the chances are that he will fall into bad habits, especially drinking and gambling with what few companions he has.

cleas fair girl and expressed himself in pretty plain k n g's English, in which his jealousy and wrath were so plainly seen, that it did the little sinner Addie all the good in the world.

She had smiled, and dropped her eyes, and dropped her head, and half-maddened him with her bewilderingly little graces; she had been so indignant, and saucy, and coolly haughty, half-killing him with those cruelly sharp weapons; then she had assumed the rôle of magnificently indifferent, and graciously careless, and had changed the topic of conversation with such ease and tact that he felt more completely wretched than ever.

And he had gone away, frozen into the most perfect semblance of sarcastic super-unconcernedness, bidding her adieu with the elaborate polished bow of a dancing-master—an exaggerated politeness she knew he simply execrated; and then Addie had from her house, with her dark eyes all a-shine, her red lips parted in a rough smile that showed the dimple in her cheek, and thought the thoughts recorded above.

After that, she prepared for a drive Mr. Tremaine had asked her to take with him that day at two, and as she knew the route passed the window of Bertie Forrest's office, and as she knew Bertie was always at his seat by the window, without fail, from two until after five, and would be dead sure to see her, she dressed herself in her very prettiest, and wore the jaunty little seal-skin walking-hat that Mr. Forrest had such a partiality for.

Certainly she was very pretty—charmingly pretty, and so blooming and fresh—"sweet as a peach," and young Tremaine congratulated himself on her appearance and get-up, as he drove her along.

While in his accustomed seat at his office window, Bertie Forrest tried to attend to his duties, but somehow or other failed, because Addie's dark, lovely eyes kept smiling mockingly in his own, and he could not concentrate his thoughts sufficiently to even attempt to compute the required strain on an iron bridge it was his present duty to estimate.

"She is fair as an angel, and false as a woman," she has made me her toy while the humor pleased her, then she threw me aside when her fancy changed and she preferred a newer one! She has wound me completely around her finger, and now, I dare say, laughs at her power and my pain! I could almost swear never to speak to, or look at a woman again. At all events, never to her!"

And just at that instant he raised his eyes

since their stormy parting. He was a little paler than usual, but just the same elegant, courteous gentleman, as he raised his hat and bowed and pronounced her name distinctly, quickly, but as frigidly as ice itself.

She flushed somewhat, felt a little flustered, but managed to return the salutation as coldly as he gave it. Then she went home and cried for an hour or two, and came out from the battle weakened.

"I'll capitulate; I can afford to. I'll give him a chance, and, of course, he'll take the hint." So she wrote him a little note on her monogrammed French paper, asking him if he would accompany her and her sister, whose escort was Frank Sydney, on a sleigh-ride that evening at seven o'clock.

And while the messenger was gone she was in a state of pleasant excitement, and even went to her room to arrange her hair as Mr. Forrest liked to see it.

The answer came, on a sheet of business paper, with not even an envelope around it; and it contained just as few words as possible required to thank her for her invitation, and telling her a previous engagement made it entirely impossible.

And while Addie cried over the terse, awfully polite note, Mr. Forrest was sternly re-reading hers.

"I'll never give her another chance to make a fool of me."

So the early winter days wore away. Christmas passed, and New Year came, but Mr. Forrest never came near her, and Addie began to grow pale and drooping, and refused to go out as often as before.

"I'm not sick, not a bit," she insisted, and in her own heart she knew she was sick to her very soul's core, because of Bertie Forrest's continuous cruelty to her.

"If I only could see him—if he would only let me see him a minute!" she would mourn to herself, and then her woman's pride would come up in her heart, and she would declare she cared no more than he did.

Until one day her sister's lover, Frank Sydney, startled her with the news that Bertie Forrest had accepted a position with the famous Renwick brothers, bridge builders and iron foundry men, away off hundreds of miles away, where he would make money, and earn the reputation he deserved. And the arrangements were all made, and Bertie was to go on the twentieth of January.

Addie's face was turned toward the window, so that no one saw the sharp wound she had received. Bertie to go away for good, on the twentieth and this the fifteenth! And he had made no effort to bid her good-by after all the intimacy that had existed between them. It was too cruel, too hard for her to bear. And at that instant Mr. Bertie Forrest passed the house, and in a second the window was up, and Addie speaking to him.

"Mr. Forrest, stop one moment! We have just heard the strangest news—is it really true you are going away?"

He assured her it was all so. "You surely did not think of leaving town without saying good-by to us, did you? We may expect you to give us a moment at least, Mr. Forrest?"

Her low, sweet voice was thrilling him with its old power; her pitiful dusky eyes were looking in his own with such pleading in them; and he thought what an ardent flirt this girl was to so try to draw him in her toils again. So he stole his heart as well as he could as he answered her.

"If you wish it I will call to exchange farewells, Miss Westbrook."

And Addie closed the window, wondering if nothing ever would turn his heart toward her again.

All those five intervening days she waited, and watched, and listened for the sound of his voice in the hall, but he did not come, although twice he passed the house; and Addie began to harden against him for his marked discourtesy, so that when, an hour before his departure, he called, on his way to the depot, she was in a state of indifference that equaled his own cool courtesy.

"You think of remaining permanently, Mr. Forrest, of course? Papa says the position is good, and will be a fine opening for you. You would be foolish to return to this humdrum little town."

She was bright and sparkling, but with the cold brilliancy of an icicle when the sun shines on it.

"I certainly would be very foolish to return here where I have nothing beyond pleasant associations to attract me. No, I am quite sure I am bidding my friends good-by indeed." He gave her his hand as he would have offered it to an acquaintance of a day's standing, and she laid hers limply, chillingly in it.

"Well, then, good-by, Mr. Forrest. Of course, if ever you make a flying trip back, you will let us have a look at you."

"I think that even a 'flying trip' is in the far future, Miss Westbrook. I expect to work hard, and nothing short of a positive, special summons from the only person I leave here for whom I care particularly, will have the power to bring me—a summons I am sure never to get."

He looked at her one second, but she was not conscious of it.

"We will hope for the sake of your other friends, for whom you do not particularly care, that you receive such summons."

So they parted, two as thoroughly unhappy people as ever lived; he, to try and drown his unrest in hard mental and physical work, manlike. She—oh, I love her, with all her faults, because she was so thoroughly womanly—she, to grieve and love the more, and finally, to cut the Gordian knot.

And the way it was cut was apparent to Bertie Forrest the morning of St. Valentine's day, and found on his desk, among other mail matter, a letter addressed in a handwriting that made his heart leap to his mouth.

It was from Addie. Just such a frank, honest letter as a woman has a perfect right to write to the man she knows she has injured. It was a letter asking him to forgive her, to install her as his best, dearest friend, and, if it suited him, to come to her. An hour later, Mr. Forrest was on the through express for home, and the midnight bells of that blessed St. Valentine's day had not yet tolled its death, when he stood before the woman he loved, whose love and courage had broken down the barriers that would have forever divided them, to their everlasting error.

"My darling always! My darling forever!" He said it as he clasped her in his eager arms and looked in her eyes.

"I have been so alarmed since I sent that letter. Oh, Bertie, if you hadn't been glad! Tell me, was I too bold?"

And we will not record his answer, since it might bias other people, of whom we ask the same question. But—Addie secretly observes St. Valentine's day; and Mr. Forrest has a certain letter put religiously away in his safe; and he calls it his passport to happiness. And it was.

Was She Too Bold?

A ROMANCE OF ST. VALENTINE'S DAY.

BY MARY REED CROWELL.

SHE was so perfectly lovely, and bewitching, and graceful, and the most outrageous little flirt in town; and just now, as she stood at the window holding aside the lace curtain with the daintiest of fair white hands, so that she might watch Bertie Forrest down the street, there was an imp of roguish mischief dancing in each of her laughing eyes that were as lustroly dark as a chestnut shell.

"What a great, silly goose he is! As if I am not positive it is only a severe attack of jealousy. He almost swore he would never speak to me again, but I know! It won't be a week before he's back—bless his dear, silly old self! He mustn't imagine I never shall make myself agreeable to anybody but himself!"

And that Addie Westbrook made herself remarkably agreeable to every gentleman with whom she came in contact, thereby earning the title of coquette far and near, was not so much the reason Mr. Bertie Forrest had quarreled with her, as that she had, after weeks and weeks of accepted devotion from him, which to him meant solemn earnest, she had suddenly and unaccountably shaken him off, and was flirting outrageously with a handsome, dashing young fellow who had lately arrived among them, and who had entered Judge Beacon's law office as junior partner.

He was a fine-looking, pleasant-mannered young man—handsomer than Bertie Forrest, and considerably better off, and, as Addie could not possibly exist without a series of excitements in the flirting line, it was easy enough seen by every one but the gentleman concerned, why she had let him drop, and taken up Mr. Tremaine.

It had hurt Bertie Forrest sorely, so sorely that he had never known except by the pain of the wound Addie gave him, that he had so madly loved her. It had hurt him, and soured him, despite his earnest endeavors to live it down by hard work; he could not drive it from his thoughts, and had finally gone to the mer-

and saw Addie Westbrook's sparkling, piquant face beside Mr. Tremaine's, both of them laughing in the most delightfully interested way, and apparently too absorbed in each other's society to as much as bestow a glance in his direction.

If he had only known how Addie had schemed and maneuvered that the scene should transpire precisely as it did, if he had only known that he had caught a sideways glimpse of his weary, drooping head, and her heart had given a bound of warm pity and penitence, I hardly think his fine face would have paled so deathly white, or his hand trembled so as they drove slowly on.

But he did not know, of course; and although the first effect of what he naturally supposed to be her ostentatious cruelty, was a sharpening of the pain in his heart, and an intensifying of the general wretchedness that had taken possession of him, the secondary effect was beneficial, for his manliness and pride were aroused, and he resolved that he could and would endure it, for all he knew he would never care for any other woman.

And he did not change his mind—while Addie, thorough woman that she was, did. Because she missed his coming to her more than she dreamed she would. Because, when the time passed by which she had given him to come creeping back, and he showed no signs of so doing, she was astonished, and—piqued. Because, of all the beaux she had had, she never so thoroughly enjoyed the society of any one as she had enjoyed Bertie Forrest's society. There had been about him the ring of the true metal, and she missed him, more than she would, as yet, admit to herself.

Mr. Tremaine was devotedly attentive to those days, and people thought that, at last, a match was imminent, but Mr. Tremaine could have told how capricious Miss Westbrook was and how entirely unfounded the voice of rumor was.

She began to fret, inwardly, over Mr. Forrest's stubborn withdrawal of himself.

"How can he be so cruel? He knows I meant nothing. I shall positively hate him if he behaves so childishly angry any longer. I will not trouble myself about him any more—there!"

And for five days Miss Westbrook kept her word, feeling in her heart remarkably indignant and quite conscious that she was keeping up a bitterly fierce state of hostility.

The sixth day she happened to meet him in the post-office, for the first time face to face